

From: Kaiser Family Foundation
Sent: Friday, July 14, 2017 12:23 PM
To: Alexander, Steven
Subject: The Latest: Growing Majority of Americans Oppose GOP ACA Replace Plan; Compare Revised Senate Bill to ACA; Redesignated California Healthline Site & More

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Kaiser Family Foundation's The Latest

July 14, 2017

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ROLLING

Kaiser Health Tracking Poll - July 2017: What's Next for Republican ACA Repeal and Replacement Plan Efforts?

As the U.S. Senate continues to debate their plan to repeal and replace the 2010 Affordable Care Act, the latest Kaiser Family Foundation tracking poll finds the public souring on the effort with a growing majority opposed to the plan. ([News Release](#), [Poll](#))

CALIFORNIA HEALTHLINE

Redesigned Website for California Healthline

New this week: the redesigned website for California Healthline, the California Health Care Foundation's free, daily digest of health care policy news and opinion for our nation's largest state, produced by Kaiser Health News. ([Website](#))

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REPEAL AND REPLACE WATCH

HEALTH REFORM

Updated for Revised Senate Bill: Compare Proposals to Replace The Affordable Care Act

President Donald Trump and Republicans in Congress have committed to repealing and replacing the Affordable Care Act (ACA). How do their replacement proposals compare to the ACA? How do they compare to each other? View our interactive side-by-side, updated to include revisions to the Senate Republican bill unveiled on July 13. ([Interactive](#))

Podcast: What The Health? Senate Health Bill 2.0. Still On Life Support

Julie Rovner of Kaiser Health News, Joanne Kenen of Politico, Sarah Kliff of Vox.com and Margot Sanger-Katz of The New York Times discuss the changes to the proposed Senate health bill, and whether they can win the 50 votes needed to pass it. Plus, for “extra credit,” the panelists recommend their favorite health stories of the week they think you should read, too. ([Podcast](#))

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News and Headlines

News and headlines from Kaiser Health News (KHN) and California Healthline (CHL). Follow KHN on Facebook, [Twitter](#), and LinkedIn, and CHL on Facebook and Twitter, for the latest updates.

- Redesigned Website for California Healthline ([CHL](#))
- Podcast: What the Health? Senate Health Bill 2.0 Still On Life Support ([KHN](#))
- Senate Health Bill Still Short On = 2Yays’ But Leaders Vow Vote Next Week ([KHN](#))
- Senate Revises Health Care Legislation: Read The New Bill ([KHN](#))
- Opposition To GOP Repeal Bill Inches Up And Intensifies ([KHN](#))
- Millions More Uninsured Could Impact Health Of Those With Insurance, Too ([KHN](#))
- GOP Health Bill Eases Rules For Some Small-Business Plans ([KHN](#))
- Whichever Way ‘Repeal And Replace’ Blows, Pharma Is Due For Windfall ([KHN](#))
- GOP Seeks To Sweeten Health Savings Account Deals. Will Consumers Bite? ([KHN](#))

- Nursing Homes Move Into The Insurance Business ([KHN](#))
- Medicare's Financial Outlook Slightly Improved, Trustees Say ([KHN](#))
- California Sued For Allegedly Substandard Medi-Cal Care ([CHL](#))
- Senators Grill Top Indian Health Officials About Trump Budget ([KHN](#))
- In Texas, People With Mental Illness Find Work Helping Peers ([KHN](#))
- Transgender Health Care Targeted In Crusade To Undo ACA ([KHN](#))
- Medical Transportation Provider Accused Of Disserving L.A.'s Frail Patients ([KHN](#))
- DNA Links Deadly Germs, Tainted Heart Surgery Devices To German Factory ([KHN](#))
- Messages From Beyond: Using Technology To Seal Your Legacy ([KHN](#))
- Latest news summaries from the [KHN Morning Briefing](#)

Data and Analysis

The latest in health policy data and analysis from the Kaiser Family Foundation.

- Kaiser Health Tracking Poll - July 2017: What's Next for Republican ACA Repeal and Replacement Plan Efforts? ([News Release](#), [Poll](#))
- Kaiser Health Tracking Poll: The Public's Views on the ACA ([Interactive](#))
- Updated for Revised Senate Bill: Compare Proposals to Replace The Affordable Care Act ([Interactive](#))
- Medicaid Physician Fees ([New State Data](#))
- Latest news summaries from the [Kaiser Daily Global Health Policy Report](#)

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The Buzz

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See what's driving health policy conversation on social media. Follow Kaiser Family Foundation on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn for the latest updates and perspectives.



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Most of the public has an unfavorable view of ACA replacement plan (61%). When we asked them to tell us why, here's some of what they said:

Why People Oppose the Replacement Plan: In their Own Words

"The whole thing is hurting those who are the least able to defend themselves."

"It is just a tax break for the rich in disguise."

"It doesn't repeal Obama Care."

"Because I have a special child who will lose his care."

KFF.org

SOURCE: Kaiser Family Foundation Health Tracking Poll (conducted July 5-10, 2017)

6:27 AM - 14 Jul 2017

Filling the need for trusted information on national health issues, the Kaiser Family Foundation is a nonprofit organization based in Menlo Park, California.

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Kaiser Family Foundation & Kaiser Health News

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From: Kaiser Health News

Sent: Tuesday, August 22, 2017 6:35 AM

To: Alexander, Steven

Subject: KHN Morning Briefing: August 22, 2017

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KHN
KAISER HEALTH NEWS

Morning Briefing

Tuesday, August 22, 2017

Check Kaiser Health News online for the latest headlines

In This Edition:

KAISER HEALTH NEWS ORIGINAL STORIES

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2. **Oregon, Texas Are Latest States To Put Down Markers On Abortion Coverage**
3. **Political Cartoon: 'Enough Is Enough?'**

HEALTH LAW

4. **'Obviously We Had A Setback': McConnell Uncertain About Next Steps On Health Care**

MEDICAID

5. **Medicaid Officials Say Repeal Effort Bolsters Support Of Program And Efforts To Improve It**

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From Kaiser Health News:

KAISER HEALTH NEWS ORIGINAL STORIES

1. Dying At Home In An Opioid Crisis: Hospices Grapple With Stolen Meds

As more patients receive hospice care at home, some of the powerful, addictive drugs they're prescribed are ending up in the wrong hands. (Melissa Bailey, 8/22)

2. Oregon, Texas Are Latest States To Put Down Markers On Abortion Coverage

The governors of both states signed abortion legislation last week. Texas will restrict insurance coverage while Oregon will require that it be covered. (Michelle Andrews, 8/22)

3. Political Cartoon: 'Enough Is Enough?'

Kaiser Health News provides a fresh take on health policy developments with "Political Cartoon: 'Enough Is Enough?'" by Gary McCoy.

Here's today's health policy haiku:

IS MEDICARE STEPPING BACKWARD?

Payment for Value —
New concept in medicine.
Too much for Tom Price?

- Ernest R. Smith

If you have a health policy haiku to share, please Contact Us and let us know if you want us to include your name. Keep in mind that we give extra points if you link back to a KHN original story.

Summaries Of The News:

Health Law

4. 'Obviously We Had A Setback': McConnell Uncertain About Next Steps On Health Care

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) says after Congress returns from recess that Republicans will have to sit down with Democrats and figure out a way forward. Meanwhile, state and local groups are stepping up to preemptively counter any lack of enrollment support from the federal government.

The Hill: McConnell: Path On Healthcare 'Murky'

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) acknowledged Monday that Congress's next steps on healthcare are unclear after Republicans failed to repeal ObamaCare. "Obviously we had a setback on the effort to make dramatic changes on ObamaCare. The way forward now is somewhat murky," the Senate GOP leader said at a Chamber of Commerce event in Kentucky with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin. (Carney, 8/21)

The Hill: Fearing Sabotage, Groups Prepare ObamaCare Blitz

State and local groups that help support ObamaCare are springing into action ahead of an enrollment period they fear could be sabotaged by the Trump administration. Their marketing efforts are expanding, their advertisements are starting earlier, and those that fought repeal are shifting their focus to spreading the word about open enrollment, which begins Nov. 1. (Roubein and Hellmann, 8/22)

And in other news on the health law —

Modern Healthcare: With Congress Deadlocked, Iowa And Oklahoma Seek To Reform The ACA Through Waivers

Iowa and Oklahoma are about to test the Trump administration's declared commitment to giving states greater leeway in establishing alternatives to the Affordable Care Act's insurance exchanges. Iowa officials plan to submit a sweeping state innovation waiver request to the CMS next week that would substantially revamp the ACA premium tax credit model and use some of the federal subsidy money to set up a reinsurance program to protect insurers that sign up high-cost enrollees. ... On Wednesday, Oklahoma filed a waiver request, also under the ACA's Section 1332 state innovation waiver authority, to use federal subsidy money to fund a new reinsurance program, as the first step in a broader reform of the ACA coverage system. (Meyer, 8/18)

Medicaid

5. Medicaid Officials Say Repeal Effort Bolsters Support Of Program And Efforts To Improve It

Matt Salo, executive director of the National Association of Medicaid Directors, says states will likely soon begin bids to bolster the program to be better coordinated. In other news, Republicans opposed to Medicaid expansion in Maine are beginning to organize to fight a referendum there and Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe presses lawmakers once again to expand the program there.

Bloomberg/BNA: Medicaid Directors See Boon In Newfound Public Awareness
Medicaid directors are seeing a newfound public awareness and appreciation of the safety-net health insurance program in the wake of failed Obamacare repeal-and-replace efforts. That's critical for Medicaid's future, Matt Salo, executive director of the National Association of Medicaid Directors, told Bloomberg BNA Aug. 18. Now the real work will move back to the states, which can push bids to bolster the program to be more value-driven, holistic, and better coordinated for the most needy beneficiaries, he said. (Pelham, 8/18)

Portland (Maine) Press Herald: Republicans Organize To Raise Concerns About Medicaid Expansion In Maine
Several Republican lawmakers are expected to announce their concerns Tuesday about expanding Medicaid, a first step toward what could become a formal campaign to oppose the question voters will face on the Nov. 7 ballot. ... Maine Equal Justice Partners, a progressive advocacy group for low-income people, gathered more than 67,000 signatures of registered Maine voters to put the Medicaid expansion question on the Nov. 7 ballot. The proposal would expand Medicaid coverage to adults under 65 who earn below \$16,000 for a single person and \$22,000 for a family of two. (Thistle, 8/21)

Richmond Times-Dispatch: McAuliffe Backs Devoting Full Surplus To Reserve Funds, Pitches Medicaid Expansion Again
Gov. Terry McAuliffe warned General Assembly budget leaders on Monday that Virginia needs to bolster its cash reserves to hedge against the potential threat to the state's economy from President Donald Trump's proposed federal budget. McAuliffe, speaking to the assembly money committees in their temporary home in the Pocahontas Building, also called on legislators for the fourth time to expand Virginia's Medicaid program with billions of dollars in federal funds under the Affordable Care Act after its survival from attempts to repeal the law in Congress. They quickly declined the offer. (Martz, 8/21)

PUBLIC HEALTH AND EDUCATION

6. Johnson & Johnson Ordered To Pay \$417M In Case Linking Talcum Powder, Ovarian Cancer

Eva Echeverria, 63, of East Los Angeles, is one of thousands of women who sued the consumer products giant, claiming Johnson's baby powder caused their disease.

The New York Times: \$417 Million Awarded In Suit Tying Johnson's Baby Powder To Cancer

In what may be the largest award so far in a lawsuit tying ovarian cancer to talcum powder, a Los Angeles jury on Monday ordered Johnson & Johnson to pay \$417 million in damages to a medical receptionist who developed ovarian cancer after using the company's trademark Johnson's Baby Powder on her perineum for decades. (Rabin, 8/22)

USA Today: Jury Awards \$417M In Lawsuit Linking Talcum Powder To Cancer

The judgment, reached after a roughly one-month long trial in Los Angeles Superior Court, includes \$347 million in punitive damages against Johnson & Johnson. It was the latest among several verdicts against the consumer-products maker, with about 2,000 women having filed similar cases. In the latest verdict, plaintiff Eva Echeverria alleged that Johnson & Johnson was aware of potential dangers from consistently using its talcum-based products for personal hygiene but refused to warn the public. (Jones, 8/21)

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The Wall Street Journal: Johnson & Johnson Hit With \$417 Million Verdict In Baby Powder Case

The verdict here comes in the sixth completed trial alleging the talcum powder in J&J's popular bath product causes ovarian cancer, and that the company failed to warn about the risks. The company won a trial in March but lost four others, leading to jury awards totaling more than \$300 million that are now on appeal. (Randazzo, 8/21)

The Associated Press: Record \$417M Award In Lawsuit Linking Baby Powder To Cancer

The verdict in the lawsuit brought by the California woman, Eva Echeverria, marks the largest sum awarded in a series of talcum powder lawsuit verdicts against Johnson & Johnson in courts around the U.S. Echeverria alleged Johnson & Johnson failed to adequately warn consumers about talcum powder's potential cancer risks. She used the company's baby powder on a daily basis beginning in the 1950s until 2016 and was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2007, according to court papers. (Balsamo, 8/21)

Los Angeles Times: L.A. Jury Hits Johnson & Johnson With \$417-Million Verdict Over Cancer Link To Its Talc

Johnson & Johnson immediately announced it would seek to overturn the verdict. "We will appeal today's verdict because we are guided by the science, which supports the safety of Johnson's Baby Powder," the company said in a statement. (Winton, 8/21)

Bloomberg: J&J Loses \$417 Million Talc Verdict In First California Case

Mark Robinson, a lawyer for plaintiff Eva Echeverria, said outside the courtroom that J&J should start warning women immediately about the risks of its talcum powder. "J&J needs to see they not only have verdicts against them in St. Louis, they now also have them in Los Angeles," Robinson said. "There's a problem all over the country with women using talcum powder on daily basis for 10, 20, 30, 40 years." (Fisk and Pettersson, 8/21)

And in other news on the company —

Stat: What The J&J CEO Told Employees About The Trump Manufacturing Council
Johnson & Johnson (JNJ) chief executive officer Alex Gorsky was initially chastised last week for deciding to stay on President Trump's manufacturing advisory council, before reversing course just as Trump announced the panel would be dissolved after a series of defections. A trio of internal memos sent to J&J employees, reviewed by STAT, offer some insight into Gorsky's reasoning. An exodus from the council began with Merck chief executive Ken Frazier, one of the most prominent African-American business leaders in the country, two days after Trump's initial comments on Saturday, Aug. 12. Originally, Gorsky planned to sit tight. In a memo distributed on Monday, Aug. 14, Gorsky essentially argued that J&J had an opportunity to influence the Trump administration. (Silverman, 8/21)

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7. Did You Damage Your Eyes Looking At The Eclipse? Probably Not

But if you did, the damage takes one to two days to kick in.

USA Today: Solar Eclipse: How To Know If You Damaged Your Eyes During The Eclipse

If you, like our nation's president, looked directly into Monday's eclipse, you might wonder: Did I just damage my eyes? Whether by accident or disregard, untold masses looked at the sun with unshielded eyes during the must-see-safely event. By Monday afternoon, people were already freaking out about their eyes online. (Hafner, 8/21)

NPR: Eye Damage From The Eclipse Might Show Up The Next Day

[I]f you did steal unprotected glances skyward, and especially if your eyes felt funny or hurt a little afterward, you might be wondering how you'll know if you've done any long-term damage. To answer that question, we once again turned to Ralph Chou, a professor emeritus of optometry and vision science at the University of Waterloo, in

Ontario, Canada, and a leading authority on the damage the sun's rays can do to the eye's retina. (Hsu, 8/21)

8. 'It's Only Getting Worse': Hospitals Flooded With Opioid Patients As Crisis Rages On

There's been a 64 percent increase in inpatient stays, while emergency room visits related to opioids have doubled since 2005. Meanwhile, Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price praises China's help in cracking down on opioids. And experts say hospices aren't doing enough to monitor family members' potential abuse of patients' drugs.

The New York Times: Hospitals Are Clogged With Patients Struggling With Opioids
President Trump this month declared the opioid epidemic a national emergency, a move intended to direct more funding and attention toward the crisis. Recent research on hospitalizations related to opioid use depicts a problem of increasing urgency. According to a series of government briefs published this year, nearly 1.3 million hospitalizations involving opioids occurred in the United States in 2014. The figure includes hospitalizations for abuse of both prescription and illegal drugs, including heroin. (Yin, 8/21)

The Associated Press: US Health Chief Lauds China For Help With Opioid Control
China has been an "incredible partner" in cracking down on synthetic opioids seen as fueling fast-rising overdose deaths in the United States, U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price said Monday during a visit to the country considered the source of many of the deadly substances sought by addicts. Price said China has been quick to respond when regulators identify a threat from a dangerous drug such as fentanyl, the powerful opioid blamed for thousands of fatal overdoses, including the death of entertainer Prince. (Bodeen, 8/21)

Kaiser Health News: Dying At Home In An Opioid Crisis: Hospices Grapple With Stolen Meds
Nothing seemed to help the patient ? 4 and hospice staff didn't know why. They sent home more painkillers for weeks. But the elderly woman, who had severe dementia and incurable breast cancer, kept calling out in pain. The answer came when the woman's daughter, who was taking care of her at home, showed up in the emergency room with a life-threatening overdose of morphine and oxycodone. It turned out she was high on her mother's medications, stolen from the hospice-issued stash. (Bailey, 8/22)

In other news on the crisis —

Kansas City Star: Opioid Overdose Deaths Under-Reported In Kansas, Missouri And Nationwide

A study in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine says that opioid overdose deaths have been under-reported across the country, including in Kansas and Missouri. University of Virginia researcher Christopher Ruhm analyzed death certificates from 2016 and 2017, looking for overdose deaths in which the drug that caused the death was not specified. (Marso, 8/21)

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New Hampshire Union Leader: Executive Council To Mull \$1M In Grants To Fight Opioid Crisis

Nearly \$1 million in state grants to fight opioid addiction will go before the Executive Council for approval on Wednesday, including \$200,000 for Serenity Place in Manchester and \$200,000 for Harbor Homes in Nashua to keep the Safe Station programs operating in the state's two largest cities. The Department of Health and Human Services will ask the Executive Council on Wednesday to approve no-bid contracts with the two recovery services, retroactive to June 30. (Solomon, 8/22)

Stat: FDA To Evaluate Children's Cough Medicine Containing Opioids

A federal committee will meet in three weeks to consider whether cough medicine containing certain opioids should be prescribed to children, the Food and Drug Administration announced Monday. The agency already warned in April that drugs containing codeine, which is an opiate, "should not be used to treat pain or cough" in children under 12. The warning must appear on those drugs' labels. At the time, the agency said that codeine, along with tramadol, an opioid found in some pain medications for children, "carry serious risks, including slowed or difficult breathing and death, which appear to be a greater risk in children younger than 12 years." (Swetlitz, 8/21)

9. Administration Pumps Brakes On Study About Public Health Risks Of Coal Mining

"Mountaintop removal mining has been shown to cause lung cancer, heart disease and other medical problems," said Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva (D-Ariz.) "Stopping this study is a ploy to stop science in its tracks and keep the public in the dark about health risks as a favor to the mining industry, pure and simple."

The New York Times: Coal Mining Health Study Is Halted By Interior Department
The Interior Department has ordered a halt to a scientific study begun under President Obama of the public health risks of mountaintop-removal coal mining. The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, which was conducting the study, said in a statement Monday that they were ordered to stop work because the Interior Department is conducting an agencywide budgetary review. (Friedman and Plumer, 8/21)

The Washington Post: Trump Administration Halted A Study Of Mountaintop Coal Mining's Health Effects
A statement by the academy said Interior's Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement dispatched a letter Friday telling it to cease all work by an 11-member committee undertaking the study pending a departmental review of projects costing more than \$100,000. The review was prompted "largely as a result of the Department's changing budget situation," the statement said. (Fears, 8/21)

In other environmental health news —

Reveal: EPA Budget Cuts Threaten To Slow Uranium Cleanup At Navajo Nation
Dangerous remnants of the region's Cold War boom, more than 500 uranium mines were abandoned on and near the Navajo reservation, now home to about 175,000 people. Thousands of families like Hood's unwittingly used water from contaminated wells and springs to drink, bathe, hydrate their livestock and irrigate their gardens. (Spanne, 8/21)

10. There's No Cure For Alzheimer's But Those Who Are At High Risk Search For One Anyway

With the rise of genetic testing comes the looming knowledge that you may be at risk for a disease that has yet to be conquered by doctors. In other public health news: a possible cure for hair loss, the importance of breakfast, infections in babies, colon cancer, allergies and more.

Stat: At High Risk For Alzheimer's, They're Experimenting — On Themselves
Everyone at the meeting had one thing in common: a ticking time bomb buried in their DNA. The engineers, physicians, financiers, and farmers gathered here this month all had learned through genetic testing that they carry a copy or two of APOE4, an allele that substantially increases their risk of developing Alzheimer's. It's a disease with no good treatment, and no good prevention strategy. So carriers scour the internet to devise their own tactics for keeping their brains healthy: a high-fat diet. Episodic fasting.

Oils. Supplements. Regular blood tests to monitor a specific type of cholesterol. Exercise, exercise, exercise — even including barefoot cartwheels across the conference room floor. (Keshavan, 8/22)

The New York Times: Is This Treatment The Cure For Hair Loss?

When Heidi Imhof started losing her hair at 42, she also started losing sleep. Ms. Imhof, a lawyer, was afraid that blow-drying her straight dark hair would hasten the shedding, so she got up two hours early to shower and apply mousse and volumizers. When her hair finally air-dried, she'd pull it back, hoping to hide the bald patches on her scalp. "I was desperate," she said. (Rubin, 8/21)

The New York Times: The Case For A Breakfast Feast

Many of us grab coffee and a quick bite in the morning and eat more as the day goes on, with a medium-size lunch and the largest meal of the day in the evening. But a growing body of research on weight and health suggests we may be doing it all backward. (Rabin, 8/21)

The New York Times: How To Prevent Deadly Infection In Babies? Good Bacteria

It may be possible, scientists say, to save many thousands of newborns in poor countries by giving them a simple probiotic — a strain of bacteria originally scooped out of the diaper of a healthy baby. A large clinical trial in rural India has found that babies fed a special strain of *Lactobacillus* bacteria for just one week were 40 percent less likely to develop sepsis, a life-threatening bloodstream infection. (McNeil, 8/21)

The New York Times: More Young People Are Dying Of Colon Cancer

When researchers reported earlier this year that colorectal cancer rates were rising in adults as young as their 20s and 30s, some scientists were skeptical. The spike in figures, they suggested, might not reflect a real increase in disease incidence but earlier detection, which can be a good thing. (Rabin, 8/22)

The Wall Street Journal: A Striking Rise In Serious Allergy Cases

The rate of reports of severe allergic reactions to foods like peanuts has increased by nearly five times over the past decade, according to a new analysis of private insurance claims. The analysis looked at private insurance claims with a diagnosis of an anaphylactic food reaction from 2007 to 2016. Anaphylaxis is a systemic allergic reaction in which the immune system affects multiple parts of the body at the same time, often leading to trouble breathing. It can be fatal if not treated promptly and requires an injection of epinephrine and a trip to the emergency room. (Reddy, 8/21)

Stat: Ironwood Wins FDA Approval For Combination Gout Treatment

It's the most common form of inflammatory arthritis in adults, often first appears as a

painfully swollen big toe, and used to be called the “rich man’s disease” because sufferers frequently consumed lots of meat, seafood, and alcohol: gout. Now, Cambridge, Mass.-based drug maker Ironwood Pharmaceuticals Inc., has won approval from the Food and Drug Administration for a pill that can be taken once a day by patients who have not been able to control gout with other treatments. (Saltzman, 8/21)

Stat: Astronauts Could One Day Use Their Urine To Make Vitamins For Long Flights
Chemical engineers at Clemson University are bioengineering yeast to use human urine and breath to make omega-3 fatty acids, the vitamins humans need for heart, eye, and brain health that are found in fish such as salmon. It’s still in the early stages — and there are some significant hurdles to clear — but the process could one day be used to simultaneously recycle waste and keep astronauts healthy on multiyear space missions. The researchers will present their results Tuesday at the American Chemical Society’s annual meeting. (Caruso, 8/22)

The New York Times: Marijuana Tied To Hypertension Risk
Marijuana use may be a cause of high blood pressure, a new study reports. Researchers studied 332 deaths among 1,213 people participating in a larger health study, of whom 57 percent were marijuana users. They had used marijuana for an average of 12 years, and the longer they used it, the more likely they were to have hypertension. The study is in the European Journal of Preventive Cardiology. (Bakalar, 8/21)

St. Louis Public Radio: Being On The Brink Of Puberty Is Scary And Expensive For This Transgender Kid And Her Family
Approaching puberty is alarming for transgender kids like Mazy [Gilleylen]. ... Doctors can prescribe puberty-blocking drugs to prevent unwanted breast growth or a deepening voice. But the cost is out of reach for many families. (Fowler, 8/22)

Miami Herald: Zika Targets Pregnant Women's Weakened Immune System, Almost Like HIV, Study Says
Like an invader spotting a weakness in a castle’s defenses, Zika targets specific white blood cells in a pregnant woman’s immune system, enabling the virus to spread and increasing the chances of harm to unborn babies, according to a new study by researchers at the University of Southern California’s Keck School of Medicine. (Chang, 8/21)

VETERANS' HEALTH CARE

11. Rural Areas Often Overlooked For VA Nursing Home Funding, And The Agency Wants To Change That

The Department of Veterans Affairs now sets its priority list by looking at demographics and the need for beds, making it difficult for some rural areas to compete, but officials say they want to make it easier for them to get funding.

The Associated Press: VA Seeks To Funnel More Nursing Home Money To Rural Areas

Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin said Monday during a visit to Montana that his agency will propose changes to make it easier for rural areas to receive funding to build nursing homes for veterans. Rural areas are often bypassed under the agency's existing guidelines for awarding grants for veterans' homes, Shulkin told reporters after touring VA facilities and meeting with veterans in Helena. (Volz, 8/21)

In other veterans' health care news ¶ 4

Modern Healthcare: Veterans Choice Funding Strikes A Temporary Compromise
Although the Veterans Choice program received a six-month reprieve thanks to new emergency funding, it will take more than an influx of cash for the program to thrive, according to veterans groups. As it currently runs, VA Choice has problems, according to veterans organizations and experts. Though the program was supposed to cut down on wait times for veterans seeking care, some still wait weeks for appointments and provider shortages are exacerbating the program's troubles. VA Choice keeps running low on money, and the VA's healthcare infrastructure is hurting. Meanwhile, the population of veterans is changing, growing smaller but also older and more spread out across the country. (Arndt, 8/18)

MARKETPLACE

12. Hedge Fund Scoops Up Tenet Healthcare Shares

The disclosure by Camber Capital Management drove up Tenet's stock price.

Modern Healthcare: Tenet In Crosshairs Of Activist Shareholder Camber Capital
Camber Capital Management, a hedge fund with an activist history, has purchased 5.7 million shares of Tenet Healthcare Corp., or a 5.7% stake in the money-losing hospital chain. The emergence of Camber was disclosed Monday, just three days after Tenet's

largest shareholder, Glenview Capital Management, resigned two Tenet board seats, citing irreconcilable differences with management and the board. (Barkholz, 8/21)

In other health industry news —

Modern Healthcare: CHS Investor Calls For CEO Wayne Smith's Ouster
An institutional investor in Community Health Systems is calling for the ouster of CHS CEO Wayne Smith. In an open letter to CHS Monday, ASL Strategic Value Fund managing director Steven Braverman said management has failed to return his phone calls, and the company's operational turnaround has not gotten traction. (Barkholz, 8/21)

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WOMEN'S HEALTH

13. Texas To Cut Funds To Anti-Abortion Group That Failed To Meet Service Goals

The group originally projected it would serve nearly 18,000 women, but it as fallen well short of that.

The Associated Press: Texas Slashes Underperforming Anti-Abortion Group's Contract
An anti-abortion group awarded nearly \$7 million to boost women's health and family planning after the state cut off Planned Parenthood and other abortion providers is falling short and will receive far less money as a result, Texas officials said Monday. The decision comes a year after Texas hired the Heidi Group to help strengthen small clinics that specialize in women's health like Planned Parenthood but don't offer abortions. In March, The Associated Press found the Heidi Group had little to show for its work and had not performed promised outreach. (Weber, 8/21)

In other news —

Kaiser Health News: Oregon, Texas Are Latest States To Put Down Markers On Abortion Coverage
Federal health insurance rules are a moving target, and it's unclear whether Republicans will take another run at replacing the Affordable Care Act. In the meantime, some states are staking out strong positions on coverage of abortion, cementing their position regardless of how the federal landscape changes. (Andrews, 8/22)

STATE WATCH

14. State Highlights: Public Hospitals Care For Large Share Of New York City's Mental Health Patients; Calif. Bills Seek To Curb Kids' Lead Exposure

Media outlets report on news from New York, California, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Illinois, Texas, Iowa and Maryland.

The New York Times: Public Hospitals Treat Greater Share Of Mental Health Patients
It has grown into a grim ritual of late in New York City: a burst of violence in which a person with mental illness is the victim or aggressor, followed by the city mapping out breakdowns in care and pledging to stitch the safety net tighter. But the late stages of a sick person's struggle — medications missed, doctors' declining last-minute appointments, hospitals that discharge patients with little follow-up care — are often only a coda to years of moving between home and a hospital bed. (Mueller, 8/22)

San Francisco Chronicle: State Bills Seek To Cut Children's Exposure To Lead
Tests have turned up harmful levels of lead in water fountains and taps at other schools in San Diego and Los Angeles, where the district long ago decided to identify, flush and fix or seal hundreds of contaminated fountains. And in the wake of the much-publicized toxic lead contamination of water in Flint, Mich., a Reuters report revealed dozens of California neighborhoods in which tested children showed elevated levels of lead — a neurotoxin that causes developmental disorders and brain damage. (Aguilera, 8/21)

The Washington Post: Despite Measles Outbreak, Anti-Vaccine Activists In Minnesota Refuse To Back Down
Minnesota's worst measles outbreak in decades has unexpectedly energized anti-vaccine forces, who have stepped up their work in recent months to challenge efforts by public health officials and clinicians to prevent the spread of the highly infectious disease. In Facebook group discussions, local activists have asked about holding "measles parties" to expose unvaccinated children to others infected with the virus so they can contract the disease and acquire immunity. Health officials say they are aware of the message posts but haven't seen evidence that such parties are taking place. (Sun, 8/21)

Los Angeles Times: There's An Unforeseen Benefit To California's Physician-Assisted Death Law
Some doctors in California felt uncomfortable last year when a new law began allowing terminally ill patients to request lethal medicines, saying their careers had been

dedicated to saving lives, not ending them. Many healthcare systems designed protocols for screening people who say they're interested in physician-assisted death, including some that were meant to dissuade patients from taking up the option. (Karlman, 8/21)

New Hampshire Union Leader: Patients Injure 5 State Health Care Workers
Five state health care workers were injured by patients in late June and early July — one at the Sununu Youth Services Center and four at New Hampshire Hospital — in the worst spate of violence at state-run health care facilities since late 2016, the last time such work-related injuries were reported. A youth counselor who tried to break up a July 8 fight at the Sununu Center, and a nurse who was attacked at New Hampshire Hospital on June 26, have still not been able to return to work. (Solomon, 8/22)

Los Angeles Times: USC's Dean Drug Scandal Could Take A Costly Toll On The School's Legal Battle With The UC System
Six months after Dr. Carmen Puliafito stepped down as dean of USC's medical school, he was called by the university to give sworn testimony as a witness in a lawsuit the institution was facing. It was a sensitive matter with hundreds of millions of dollars potentially at stake, and two attorneys for the university sat with him as he answered questions. Almost immediately, the opposing lawyer hit on a topic that was a closely guarded secret at USC: The circumstances of Puliafito's abrupt resignation in March 2016. (Ryan, 8/21)

Chicago Tribune: Study Says Aurora Tops In Country For Pediatric Health Care
Aurora has been named tops in the country for pediatric health care. The ranking comes from Vitals, a national health care incentive and engagement program. It researched the 200 largest American cities to find out which have access to the best and worst pediatric care, according to a press release from the city of Aurora. ... When creating the list of America's Top Cities for Access to Pediatric Care, Vitals analyzed the number of pediatricians available in each city on a per-capita basis for their under-18 population, according to the press release. Patient-reported information such as ease of getting an appointment, pediatrician ratings and wait times were also factored into the final rankings. (8/22)

New Hampshire Union Leader: Telemedicine Technology Enables Former NH Surgeon To Treat Patients From Alaska
The Last Frontier may be 4,000 miles away from New Hampshire, but a former Bedford surgeon who recently relocated to Alaska is utilizing telemedicine technology to continue treating patients here. "The technology has existed and the infrastructure seems to be applicable to this kind of utilization for medical purposes," said Dr. Thomas Kleeman, an orthopedic spine surgeon and founder of the New Hampshire NeuroSpine

Institute in Bedford. Thanks to telemedicine, Kleeman, 69, is still treating patients in New Hampshire, despite his recent move to Alaska with his wife, Anne. (Houghton, 8/22)

Texas Tribune: Texas Court Halts Execution Of Convicted Child Killer Who Claims Intellectual Disability

Steven Long, 46, was set to die next Wednesday for the 2005 rape and murder of an 11-year-old girl in Dallas County. Courts had previously rejected his appeals claiming intellectual disability, but that was before the U.S. Supreme Court invalidated Texas' methods for determining intellectual disability for death-sentenced people in March. (McCullough, 8/21)

Des Moines Register: Wellmark Accused Of Breaching Hemophiliac Teen's Privacy
A leading Iowa health insurance executive violated a teenager's privacy rights when she told a Des Moines business group the young man's hemophilia was costing more than \$1 million per month to treat, patient rights groups allege. The patient advocacy groups also say the teen was no longer even covered by the insurer, Wellmark Blue Cross & Blue Shield, when the executive talked publicly about his case in March. (Leys, 8/21)

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Baltimore Sun: Paralyzed Patients Benefit From Scuba-Diving Lessons

Tylena [Fisher] is one of about 20 patients being treated at the Kennedy Krieger Institute's International Center for Spinal Cord Injury who took part in an introductory scuba class sponsored by the Cody Unser First Step Foundation. ... Part of Unser's project involves training physical and occupational therapists as certified scuba divers so they can develop these skills in their patients. (McCauley, 8/21)

The Star Tribune: Mpls. Eye Surgery Company Will Pay \$12M To Settle Kickbacks Case

A Minneapolis mobile ophthalmic company and its former CEO have agreed to pay \$12 million to resolve allegations that it lured physicians with illegal kickbacks in exchange for their business for nearly a decade, the U.S. attorney's office announced Monday. The settlement comes after a whistleblower sued Sightpath Medical, Inc., and a Bloomington surgical equipment provider over allegations that Sightpath took prospective clients on luxury skiing vacations and high-end fishing, golfing and hunting trips to persuade them to use its services. (Montemayor, 8/21)

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

15. Thinking About Policy: Mapping The 'Supposed' Obamacare 'Implosion'; Modernizing Medicaid Waiver Process

Opinion writers offer their takes on a variety of health policy topics, from the continuing analysis of where the Affordable Care Act stands to issues related to Medicare for all and single-payer health systems.

Huffington Post: 2 Maps Show The Big Obamacare Crisis Republicans Keep Citing Isn't Actually That Big

The supposed implosion of the Affordable Care Act's private insurance markets looks more and more like a manageable, geographically limited problem — one that policymakers could fix pretty easily, if only some of them weren't trying so hard to undermine the program. (Jonathan Cohn, 8/20)

Boston Globe: The GOP's Downward Spiral

In its relentless efforts to delegitimize Barack Obama, the GOP further divided the country and eroded its own capacity to govern. ... Inevitably, this nihilism bred the fiasco of the party's fake crusade against Obamacare — seven years of propaganda bereft of program. (Richard North Patterson, 8/22)

Morning Consult: Time to Modernize Medicaid's Broken Waiver Process

For all the attention on various ways to improve Medicaid's finances and sustainability in recent months, another key area of Medicaid policy that deserves focus is improving the state waiver process. With all the recent calls for bipartisanship, this should be an area where Democrats and Republicans can work together to improve the program. ... Despite the prevalence and normalcy of Medicaid waivers, the process for states obtaining waivers is needlessly long, cumbersome, and uncertain. (Rep. Brett Guthrie (R-Ky.), 8/22)

The Des Moines Register: Iowans' Health Insurance Is In Trump's Hands

When it comes to the fate of the Affordable Care Act, Iowans have been watching Congress. They should also be watching the Trump administration. Unlike President Barack Obama, who wanted the law to succeed, the current president said he would "let Obamacare fail." He and Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price can do much to ensure it does. And Iowans are positioned to feel disproportionate pain. (8/21)

Fortune: Why Medicare-For-All Is Good For Business

The ongoing failure of our health care system is directly attributable to the fact that it is largely designed not to provide quality care in a cost-effective way, but to make maximum profits for health insurance companies, the pharmaceutical industry, and

medical equipment suppliers. That has got to change. We need to guarantee health care for all. We need to do it in a cost-effective way. We need a Medicare-for-all health care system in the U.S. Let's be clear. Not only is our dysfunctional health care system causing unnecessary suffering and financial stress for millions of low- and middle-income families, it is also having a very negative impact on our economy and the business community—especially small- and medium-sized companies. (Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), 8/21)

The Atlantic: Are You Sure You Want Single Payer?

French women supposedly don't get fat, and in the minds of many Americans, they also don't get stuck with très gros medical bills. There's long been a dream among some American progressives to truly live as the "Europeans" do and have single-payer health care. Republicans' failure—so far—to repeal and replace Obamacare has breathed new life into the single-payer dream. In June, the majority of Americans told Pew that the government has the responsibility to ensure health coverage for everyone, and 33 percent say this should take the form of a single government program. The majority of Democrats, in that poll, supported single payer. A June poll from the Kaiser Family Foundation even found that a slim majority of all Americans favor single payer. (Olga Khazan, 8/21)

Forbes: The False Promise Of 'Medicaid For All'

"Medicaid for All" has suddenly become the darling of the health reform crowd. Nevada almost became the first state in the nation to adopt Medicaid for All this year -- until Gov. Brian Sandoval vetoed the plan in June. Other states, including Massachusetts and Minnesota, are looking into it. ... This argument for "Medicaid for All" might sound compelling. But Medicaid provides low-quality care to its current beneficiaries, who are generally poor and among the most vulnerable in society, at extremely high cost to taxpayers. Expanding it would only exacerbate its problems. (Sally Pipes, 8/21)

The Health Care Blog: Tackle The Next Wave Of Healthcare Consumerism

Value-based healthcare initiatives are great, but on their own won't be enough to bend the healthcare cost curve. The focus must move—and move quickly—from treating people who are sick to helping them get and stay healthy. The only way that's going to happen is by getting patients and populations motivated to do the right things early instead of desperate things late. The New Consumer World of Tools and Health Models Health plans, in particular, have shifted responsibility onto consumers. (8/21)

Los Angeles Times: Lawmakers, Activists Say Nursing-Home Residents Must Have Right To Sue

Healthcare, tax reform and the debt ceiling probably will be among the highest-profile issues when Congress returns from a monthlong recess Sept. 5. But Democratic

lawmakers and consumer advocates already have served notice that they're also going to keep a spotlight on protecting people's right to sue nursing homes for neglect or abuse of elderly patients. (David Lazarus, 8/22)

16. Viewpoints: Living Free But Addicted To Opioids; The Challenges Women In Medicine Face

A selection of opinions on public health issues from around the country.

The Wall Street Journal: Live Free Or High In The Granite State

New Hampshire residents enjoy the national spotlight that shines on them every four years during their first-in-the-nation presidential primary. They are less fond of the attention generated by their state's reputation as an epicenter of the opioid epidemic. "It's in every corner of the country, but I have to tell you, I think the Northeast, in particular New Hampshire, is ground zero," Jack Riley, the Drug Enforcement Administration's deputy administrator, said last fall. Only West Virginia has more opioid-related deaths per capita. (Matthew Hennessey, 8/21)

St. Louis Post-Dispatch: The Conundrum In Treating Opioid Addiction

The treatment of opioid addiction remains outside the realm of mainstream medicine and further segregated from the treatment of other addictions including to alcohol, methamphetamine or cocaine. The two dominant medications used in the treatment of opioid addiction, methadone and buprenorphine, are subject to considerable restrictions and best suited for patients who are actively using opioids. Methadone can only be administered in a clinic, and doctors need to obtain a DEA waiver to prescribe buprenorphine. Less than 5 percent of physicians in the U.S. have obtained the required waiver. (Percy Menzies, 8/22)

Stat: I Wish Someone Had Told Me About The Challenges Of Being A Female Doctor

Last week, I spent 75 minutes with a new patient and, after we had discussed his assessment and treatment plan, he asked to "speak with a physician." Last month, a different patient told me he preferred male physicians because he felt he could "trust them more." Each time I'm not recognized as a doctor, or a patient dismisses my advice in favor of a male physician's, I question myself. (Julia M. Reilly, 8/21)

The Washington Post: It's Time To Talk About Trump's Mental Health

How unstable and divorced from reality is President Trump? We've reached the point where the nation has the right and the need to know. We're not accustomed to asking such questions about our presidents. We don't know how to even begin inquiring into a president's mental health, so we rationalize aberrant behavior as being part of some subtle strategy. We say that Trump is cleverly playing to his base, or employing the

“madman theory” of foreign relations, or simply being unpredictable to gain an advantage by keeping everyone off balance. (Eugene Robinson, 8/21)

Lincoln Journal-Star: Jails Not Fit To House Mentally Ill For Months

With long wait times to get into the limited number of beds at the Lincoln Regional Center, men and women with mental illnesses often end up in the Lancaster County jail. Briefly holding someone at the jail isn't new, as people have long been booked before being transported to the regional center later that day. But the length of time those committed spend in jails statewide awaiting a bed to open up has grown significantly in recent years. (8/22)

The New York Times: Live In A Poor Neighborhood? Better Be A Perfect Parent. Eline's children feared going to sleep in the closet of their studio apartment, but it was the only place they would be safe from the rats. Covered in blankets from neck to toe, Eline would keep an eye on the kitchen entrance and followed the sounds of the rodents rummaging in the cupboards. I represented Eline (I can't disclose her real name), a mother of two, in Bronx Family Court when she was charged with neglect. Her younger son had been deemed undernourished because of faltering weight. Eline had struggled to keep up the feeding regimen prescribed by the kids' pediatrician. Doctors are required by law to report suspected neglect, so the pediatrician reported her to the Administration for Children's Services. The agency filed a case in family court, and the children went into foster care for three years. (Emma S. Ketteringham, 8/22)

The New York Times: Sex Education Based On Abstinence? There's A Real Absence Of Evidence

Sex education has long occupied an ideological fault line in American life. Religious conservatives worry that teaching teenagers about birth control will encourage premarital sex. Liberals argue that failing to teach about it ensures more unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. So it was a welcome development when, a few years ago, Congress began to shift funding for sex education to focus on evidence-based outcomes, letting effectiveness determine which programs would get money. But a recent move by the Trump administration seems set to undo this progress. (Aaron E. Carroll, 8/22)

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From: Kaiser Family Foundation
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To: Alexander, Steven
Subject: The Latest: Uninsured Rate in First Quarter of 2017; KHN Facebook Live on Rx Drug Pricing; Five Ideas for Fixing Individual Market

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Kaiser Family Foundation's The Latest

August 30, 2017

LIVE EVENT

Facebook Live: The Prescription Drug Pricing Pipeline

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Who contributes to what you pay at the pharmacy? Why are prescription drugs so expensive in the United States? In this Facebook Live, KHN's Julie Appleby talks with Stephanie Stapleton and answers readers' questions about the prescription drug pricing pipeline and the industry stakeholders who have a role in what you pay.

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Watch the Video

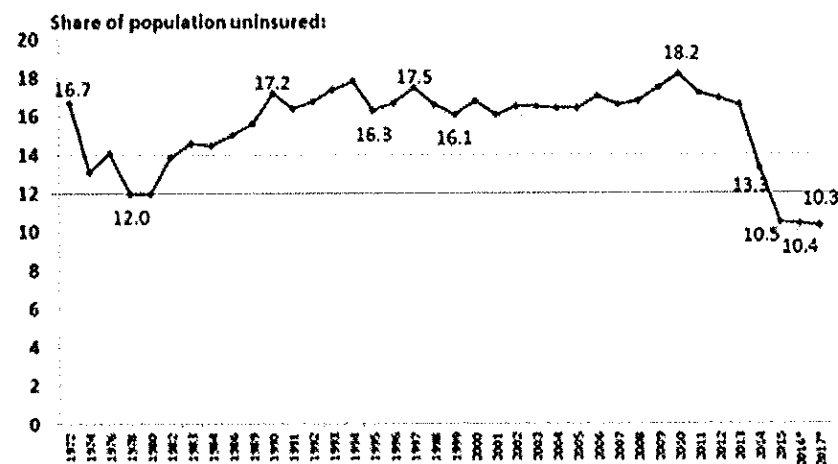
REPEAL AND REPLACE WATCH

5 Outside-The-Box Ideas For Fixing The Individual Insurance Market

As lawmakers look for ways to stabilize the health law marketplaces, a number of ideas — such as expanding who can “buy in” to Medicare and Medicaid or pushing young adults off their parents’ plans into the marketplaces — might come into play. This story also ran on NPR. ([KHN](#), [NPR](#))

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Uninsured Rate Among the Nonelderly Population, 1972-2017*



Note: 2017 data is for Q1 only.

Source: CDC/NCHS, National Health Interview Survey, reported in https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/brb/brb17_1088_1111mainbrb17_1088.pdf and https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/brb/brb17_1088_1111mainbrb17_1088.pdf.



CHARTS AND SLIDES

Uninsured Rate Among the Nonelderly Population, 1972-2017

New numbers from the CDC show that the uninsured rate has remained historically low in the first quarter of 2017. View our updated chart and explore other charts and slides by topic on our website.

View the Chart

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Note: The Latest will not be sent on Friday, September 1.

News and Headlines

News and headlines from Kaiser Health News (KHN) and California Healthline (CHL). Follow KHN on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, and CHL on Facebook and Twitter, for the latest updates.

- Facebook Live: The Prescription Drug Pricing Pipeline ([KHN](#))
- 5 Outside-The-Box Ideas For Fixing The Individual Insurance Market ([KHN](#), [NPR](#))
- Offshore Rush For Herpes Vaccine Roils Debate Over U.S. Safety Rules ([KHN](#), [The Daily Beast](#))
- What Happens If You're Forced To Switch Health Plans When You're Sick? ([KHN](#))
- Elder Abuse: ERs Learn How To Protect A Vulnerable Population ([KHN](#), [USA Today](#))
- Mayo Pain Expert: Holistic Approach Helps Patients Ditch Opioids ([KHN](#))
- Latest news summaries from the [KHN Morning Briefing](#)

Data and Analysis

The latest in health policy data and analysis from the Kaiser Family Foundation.

- Coverage and Care Pathways for People with HIV: A New Baseline ([Issue Brief](#))
- Updated Chart: Uninsured Rate Among the Nonelderly Population, 1972-2017 ([Chart](#))

The Buzz

See what's driving health policy conversation on social media. Follow Kaiser Family Foundation on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn for the latest updates and perspectives.



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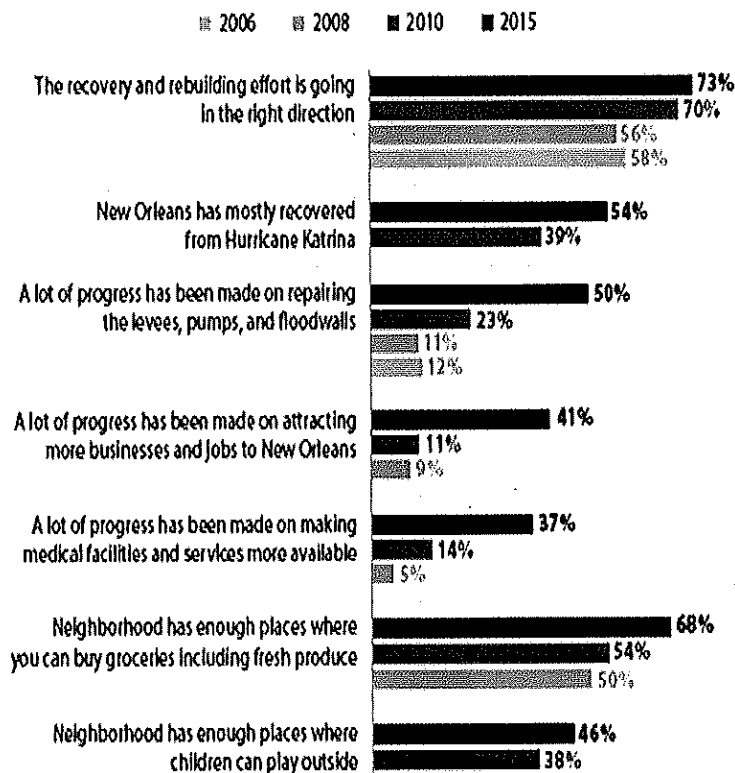
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NEW ORLEANS TEN YEARS AFTER THE STORM

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Subject: KHN Weekly Edition: September 5-8

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KHN Weekly Edition

KAISER HEALTH NEWS

Friday, September 08, 2017

Check Kaiser Health News online for the latest headlines

REPEAL & REPLACE WATCH

Podcast: 'What The Health?' Welcome Back, Congress. Now Get To Work.

In this episode of "What the Health?" D Julie Rovner of Kaiser Health News, Joanne Kenen of Politico, Margot Sanger-Katz of The New York Times and Mary Agnes Carey of Kaiser Health News discuss the return of Congress and bipartisan efforts to shore up the individual health insurance market for 2018, as well as renew the Children's Health Insurance Program.

5 Governors Press Congress For Fast Bucks To Secure Obamacare Market In 2018

By Julie Rovner and Rachel Bluth

State leaders tell senators that federal dollars are needed this fall to keep insurers participating in Obamacare next year and prevent big hikes in premiums.

Insurance Commissioners Say Help Offered By Congress Is Not Enough To Save Market

By Julie Rovner and Rachel Bluth

Making needed fixes to Obamacare before next year may be more difficult — and expensive — than Senate leaders think, state insurance commissioners suggested at a Senate hearing Wednesday.

Lawmakers Debate How Much Wiggle Room To Give States In Health Care

By Julie Rovner

The federal health law includes a provision that allows states to alter some of its rules if they can think of a better way to provide health care to their residents, but it's not clear how far outside the box states can go.

Vital Health Officials You've Never Heard Of: Insurance Commissioners In The Hot Seat

By Julie Appleby

The fate of the Affordable Care Act's individual insurance marketplaces remains in play as state insurance commissioners take a central role in the debate.

California, Other States To Extend Obamacare Sign-Up Beyond Federal Limit

By Pauline Bartolone and Carmen Heredia Rodriguez

Several state-based exchanges and the District of Columbia will allow people more than the 45 days set by the Trump administration.

COVERAGE & ACCESS

Congress' Tight Timetable Complicates Renewal Of Children's Health Plan

By Phil Galewitz

The Senate Finance Committee began hearings Thursday on the program, which provides coverage to more than 9 million children and is up for renewal on Sept. 30.

To Insure More Poor Children, It Helps If Parents Are On Medicaid

By Shefali Luthra

New research offers evidence that coverage expansion policies for adults have a positive spillover effect for kids.

For Low-Income Drug Users, Medi-Cal Offers A Fresh Start

By Anna Gorman

Under a five-year agreement with the federal government, California is using Medicaid dollars to expand drug treatment, including more inpatient care and a broader range of medications.

AGING

Shedding New Light On Hospice Care: No Need To Wait For The 'Brink Of Death'

By Judith Graham

Hospice care often prompts fear and misunderstanding, but the services provided can lead to less pain and trauma at the end of life.

The Secret To Chronic Happiness As You Age

By Bruce Horovitz

Happy doesn't always mean healthy. These older adults are still finding joy in spite of their physical challenges.

MORE KHN COVERAGE

Guess Who Pays The Price When Hospital Giants Hire Your Private Practitioner?

By Jenny Gold

Gobbling up doctors' independent practices is lucrative for hospital systems — but not necessarily a good deal for the physicians or consumers, critics say. Northern California is a case in point.

Meningitis B Vaccine's High Price Tag Poses A Health Care Conundrum

By Shefali Luthra

This immunization may mark a shift among some vaccine makers to higher-priced, "niche" preventives that protect against very specific and sometimes rare illnesses.

Move To End DACA Leaves Some Young Immigrants Fearing For Their Health

By Barbara Feder Ostrov and Anna Gorman

The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program made it possible for young adults who came into the country illegally as children to get jobs with insurance and, in some states including California, Medicaid. Now that coverage is in peril.

Hurricane's Health Toll: A Texas Doctor Taps Lessons From Katrina

By Shefali Luthra

After weathering the catastrophe in New Orleans 12 years ago, Dr. Ruth Berggren moved to Texas, where she again finds herself in the center of a hurricane crisis. In a Q&A, she draws parallels between the harrowing events and pinpoints risks in Harvey's aftermath.

How Below-The-Radar Mergers Fuel Health Care Monopolies

By Jay Hancock

Most acquisitions by hospitals of physician practices are too small to trigger antitrust attention, study says. But a buying spree of "onesies and twosies" doctor practices has driven competition down and prices up.

Another Way For Anti-Vaxxers To Skip Shots For Schoolkids: A Doctor's Note

By Ana B. Ibarra and Barbara Feder Ostrov

No longer able to get exemptions for personal beliefs in California, parents opposed to inoculations seem to be obtaining medical exemptions for their children, according to a new study.

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Morning Briefing

Monday, September 25, 2017

Check Kaiser Health News online for the latest headlines

In This Edition:

KAISER HEALTH NEWS ORIGINAL STORIES

1. **GOP Health Bill's Changes Go Far Beyond Preexisting Conditions**
2. **A Tale Of Two States: California, Texas And The Latest ACA Repeal Bid**
3. **Sunday Hours: Obamacare Website To Be Shut Down For Portion of Most Weekends**
4. **Everyone Says We Must Control Exorbitant Drug Prices. So, Why Don't We?**
5. **Medicaid Has A Bull's-Eye On Its Back, Which Means No One Is Entirely Safe**
6. **Money-Saving Offer For Medicare's Late Enrollees Is Expiring. Can They Buy Time?**
7. **Political Cartoon: 'Disarming?'**

HEALTH LAW

8. **With Clock Ticking, Senators Tweak Health Plan To Shift Money To Reluctant Senators' States**
9. **Rand Paul Gives GOP Glimmer Of Hope, But Chances Of Securing 50 Votes Still Dim**
10. **Friendship With GOP Health Plan's Drafter Not Enough To Sway McCain**
11. **Trump Blasts McCain, Puts Pressure On Wavering Senators**
12. **Cassidy Claims Coverage For Preexisting Conditions Is 'Absolutely The Same' But That's Not True**

13. Beyond Preexisting Conditions And Medicaid: How GOP Plan Would Affect Americans' Health Care

14. It's Not Just Blue States That Will Be Hurt Under GOP Plan -- Trump Country Would Take Hit Too

15. Graham-Cassidy Bill Did What Other GOP Attempts Didn't: Unified Industry Opposition

16. What's With All The Zeal To Resurrect Repeal Efforts? Some Hint At Backlash From GOP Donors

- **ADMINISTRATION NEWS**
- **17. Private Jets For Tom Price Grounded While Inspector General Investigates Travel Spending**
- **18. Administration To Shut Down ACA Enrollment Website For 12 Hours On Most Sundays**

COVERAGE AND ACCESS

19. Sanders Champions Single-Player Plan To Receptive California Crowd: 'We're Going To Win This Fight'

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MEDICAID

20. Time Quickly Ticking On Funding For Children's Health Care As Hill Focuses On ACA Instead

QUALITY

21. As Heat Rose In Fla. Nursing Home, Staff Asked For Help But Few Understood The Emergency

PUBLIC HEALTH AND EDUCATION

22. Despite Flu Vaccine's Possible Link To Miscarriage, Experts Implore Pregnant Women To Still Get The Shot

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STATE WATCH

23. State Highlights: Nurses At Mass. Hospital Plan One-Day Strike; Calif. Free Health Clinic Draws 1,500 Patients

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

24. Parsing The Plan: Graham-Cassidy Is A 'Horror' And 'Legislative Malpractice'

25. Perspectives On Single-Payer: Is It A Pipe Dream Or Is The GOP Repeal-And-Replace Plan Priming The Pump?

26. Viewpoints: Examining The Link Between Opioids And Medicaid; Putting The Squeeze On ACA Navigators

From Kaiser Health News:

KAISER HEALTH NEWS ORIGINAL STORIES

1. GOP Health Bill's Changes Go Far Beyond Preexisting Conditions

The measure proposed by Sens. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) and Bill Cassidy (R-La.) would disrupt the existing health system more than any of the measures considered so far this year, according to supporters and critics. (Julie Rovner, 9/22)

2. A Tale Of Two States: California, Texas And The Latest ACA Repeal Bid

In the GOP's attempt to repeal the Affordable Care Act, California would lose a lot of federal funding. Texas would gain a lot in the short term, but experts worry Texas would not use the money well. (April Dembosky, KQED and Ashley Lopez, KUT, 9/22)

3. Sunday Hours: Obamacare Website To Be Shut Down For Portion of Most Weekends

The shutdown, which raised protests from navigator groups, will occur from midnight Saturday to 12 p.m. Sunday on all but one weekend. (Phil Galewitz, 9/22)

4. Everyone Says We Must Control Exorbitant Drug Prices. So, Why Don't We?

Any momentum to address prescription drug costs has been lost amid rancorous debates over replacing Obamacare and stalled by roadblocks erected via lobbying and industry cash. (Jay Hancock, 9/25)

5. Medicaid Has A Bull's-Eye On Its Back, Which Means No One Is Entirely Safe

Those relying on the federal government's safety net are grandmothers, the kid next door, your supermarket cashier — maybe even you. (Phil Galewitz, 9/25)

6. Money-Saving Offer For Medicare's Late Enrollees Is Expiring. Can They Buy Time?

Sept. 30 marks the end of Medicare's temporary offer to waive penalties for certain late Medicare enrollees with Affordable Care Act insurance coverage. (Susan Jaffe, 9/22)

7. Political Cartoon: 'Disarming?'

Kaiser Health News provides a fresh take on health policy developments with "Political Cartoon: 'Disarming?'" by Adam Zyglis, The Buffalo News.

Here's today's health policy haiku:

A PROGRAM BIGGER THAN THE STEREOTYPES

It is hard to know
How far the reach. ... We're in a
Medicaid nation.

- Anonymous

If you have a health policy haiku to share, please Contact Us and let us know if you want us to include your name. Keep in mind that we give extra points if you link back to a KHN original story.

Summaries Of The News:

HEALTH LAW

8. With Clock Ticking, Senators Tweak Health Plan To Shift Money To Reluctant Senators' States

The changes would send money to Alaska and Maine, homes of Republican Sens. Lisa Murkowski and Susan Collins. Both women will be crucial if the Graham-Cassidy replacement bill is brought to the floor for a vote.

The New York Times: Senators Revise Health Bill In Last-Ditch Effort To Win Votes
With time running short, the authors of the latest plan to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act shifted money in the bill to Alaska and Maine, which are represented by Republican senators who appear reluctant to support it. The revised version of the bill, written by Senators Lindsey Graham of South Carolina and Bill Cassidy of Louisiana, would provide extra money for an unnamed "high-spending low-density state," a last-minute change seemingly aimed at Alaska and its holdout Republican senator, Lisa Murkowski, who has yet to say how she will vote. It would also send money toward Maine, whose Republican senator, Susan Collins, had said earlier on Sunday that she would almost certainly vote no. (Pear and Kaplan, 9/24)

The Washington Post: A Closer Look At How The Revised Health Bill Would Benefit Key Senators' States

The revised Republican health-care bill that senators plan to unveil Monday would partly even out wide gaps between states that would win and lose financially, providing more generous funding to states of some reluctant GOP lawmakers, but would give states less freedom to unwind federal health insurance rules. The new version of the Cassidy-Graham legislation eliminates what had been one of the measure's most controversial features, which would have enabled states to get federal permission to let insurers charge higher prices to customers with preexisting medical conditions. In addition, states now would not be able to allow health plans to impose annual or lifetime limits on coverage, as the original bill would have done. (Goldstein and Eilperin, 9/25)

The Washington Post: New Version Of Health-Care Bill Will Help Alaska And Maine — Home Of Two Holdout Senators

The plan was distributed among Republicans late Sunday, with party leaders just one = 2no" vote away from defeat and as Republican senators from across the political spectrum were distancing themselves from the prior draft. Aides to Murkowski and Collins did not immediately comment late Sunday. Some Republicans close to the process have long counted Collins as an eventual "no," predicting that little could be done to the bill to change her mind. On Sunday night, some were once again privately

pessimistic the changes would convince her to vote yes. (Sullivan, Cunningham and Phillip, 9/24)

Politico: Graham, Cassidy Revise Obamacare Repeal Bill, Appealing To Holdouts
Under the revised text, the bill's authors now project increases in federal funding for Arizona (14 percent), Kentucky (4 percent) and Alaska (3 percent), which would have seen declines under the previous version, according to a leaked analysis from Trump's health department. In particular, Murkowski's home state would uniquely benefit from Sec. 129, which allows the state with the highest separate poverty guideline — Alaska — to receive a 25 percent hike in federal matching funds for Medicaid. (Pradhan and Diamond, 9/24)

The Wall Street Journal: GOP Health Push Hits More Snags

The bill by Sens. Bill Cassidy of Louisiana and Lindsey Graham of South Carolina would set "block grants" of federal funding for each state to use for health care, including the Medicaid program for the poor. The revised text of the bill gives states broad authority to make changes to coverage mandated under the ACA, and they no longer must seek a waiver to roll back some of those requirements, which was in the earlier text of the bill, health analysts reviewing the new bill said. (Radnofsky and Peterson, 9/24)

The Associated Press: Health Care Bill Teeters, GOP Adds Money To Woo Dissidents
The numbers are misleading, partly because they omit GOP Medicaid cuts from clamping per-person spending caps on the program, said Matt House, spokesman for Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y. In a statement, Schumer said the measure would "throw our health insurance system into chaos." (Fram, 9/25)

The Hill: GOP Changes Graham-Cassidy Bill To Win Over Wary Senators

"Despite an attempt to appear to add money for a select few states, this bill is just as bad for those states and the rest of the states because it still contains a massive cut to Medicaid, and would throw our health insurance system into chaos while raising premiums," Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer (N.Y.) said in a statement. "It still takes away protections for those with preexisting conditions and further weakens consumer protections." (Sullivan, 9/24)

Los Angeles Times: Senate Republicans Unsure What Their Healthcare Bill Would Do, Even As They Push Ahead On It

With a vote expected as soon as Wednesday, according to the White House, and backers still talking about potentially major changes, the legislation will get its first and only congressional hearing Monday afternoon. The independent Congressional Budget Office, which lawmakers rely on to assess major legislation, already has said it won't

have time to analyze the bill's effect on health coverage and insurance premiums. "This is like legislating blind," said University of North Carolina political scientist Jonathan Oberlander, who has written extensively on the history of major healthcare legislation. = 2It is really hard to find an example of something where Congress was this reckless." (Levey, 9/25)

Bloomberg: GOP Revises Obamacare Repeal With Bill Headed To Likely Defeat
If Republicans can't get the votes -- or decide to scrap this bill altogether -- it would mark another reminder of the party's inability to deliver on seven years of promises to repeal the 2010 law. The GOP could still try to resurrect a proposal later in the year, but the repeal effort's collapse would seed doubts about the party's ability to deliver any significant legislative victories. (Litvan, Tracer and Dennis, 9/25)

The Hill: Republicans Struggle To Keep ObamaCare Repeal Alive
"It's not dead," Marc Short, the White House director of legislative affairs, told "Fox News Sunday." "Here we are, just days away from a final vote and we've trying to win over the support of the last couple senators to get there." Short added that he anticipated a vote on the healthcare legislation to come up on Wednesday. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) hasn't formally scheduled a vote but said last week that he "intends" to bring up ObamaCare repeal. (Carney, 9/24)

CQ: Byrd Rule Issues Could Dampen Repeal Efforts
Congress has just a few days to act on the Republican health care repeal bill through the shortcut budget reconciliation process, but the bill's abortion restrictions could create problems under those rules. The draft bill from Sens. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C.; Bill Cassidy, R-La.; Dean Heller, R-Nev.; and Ron Johnson, R-Wis., retains several of the anti-abortion provisions from previous efforts to repeal the 2010 health care law. Those include language defunding Planned Parenthood for one year and banning individuals from using tax credits to buy insurance that covers abortion. Both provisions were both deemed violations by the parliamentarian in July. (Raman, 9/22)

The Hill: Graham: Budget Resolution Must Keep ObamaCare Repeal Debate Alive
Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) said on Sunday he would not vote for a budget resolution that did not allow the health care debate to continue. "We're not going to vote for a budget resolution that doesn't allow the health care debate to continue," Graham, who sits on the Senate Budget Committee, said on ABC's "This Week." (Carney and Manchester, 9/24)

The Hill: Graham Pushes Back On Working With Democrats On Health Care Reform
Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) on Sunday pushed back on the possibility of working with Democrats on health care reform, saying ObamaCare is a placeholder for

"BernieCare" for Democrats. "I've come to conclude that ObamaCare is a placeholder for BernieCare in the Democratic world," Graham said on ABC's "This Week," adding that there is no bipartisan process at this point for moving forward on health care reform. (Manchester, 9/24)

9. Rand Paul Gives GOP Glimmer Of Hope, But Chances Of Securing 50 Votes Still Dim

Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) hasn't shut the door on negotiations with Senate leadership, but other lawmakers, such as Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas), voice concerns which place more obstacles on the proposal's path to passage.

The Washington Post: Sen. Rand Paul Lays Out Demands On Health Care As Talks Continue

The embattled Republican effort to repeal the nation's health-care law now centers on winning over a hard-line conservative, Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.), who continues to engage with President Trump and Senate leaders, giving proponents of the latest GOP bill a glimmer of hope. While Paul remains wary of that proposal, he signaled Sunday that he is willing to consider a "narrow" version of the legislation, which would give states vast authority over money provided under the Affordable Care Act and waive many federal rules and regulations. (Costa, 9/24)

The Hill: Paul: Block Grants Can 'Set Up A Perpetual Food Fight'

Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.), who has said he will vote against the GOP's latest ObamaCare repeal bill, said Sunday that converting health care funding into block grants to states sets up "a perpetual food fight." ¶ CWell I've always been a yes for repeal but the bill, unfortunately the Graham-Cassidy, basically keeps most of the ObamaCare spending," Paul told NBC's "Meet the Press," referencing the legislation Sens. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) and Bill Cassidy (R-La.) are pushing. (Shelbourne, 9/24)

Politico: Cruz Opposes Latest Obamacare Repeal Attempt

Sen. Ted Cruz on Sunday said he doesn't support the latest Obamacare repeal plan, dealing a fresh blow to Republicans' last-ditch effort to kill Barack Obama's signature health care law. After seven years of promises to repeal Obamacare, Republicans have six days to pass legislation with a party-line vote. But with Cruz's opposition, at least five Republicans in the 52-member caucus have signaled that they either won't vote for or are leaning against supporting the Graham-Cassidy bill. (Rayasam and McCaskill, 9/24)

The Hill: Cruz: ObamaCare Repeal Bill Doesn't Have My Support Yet
Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) said on Sunday that he isn't yet ready to support the latest GOP effort to repeal and replace ObamaCare, increasing uncertainty that Republicans will be able to pass the legislation. "Right now they don't have my vote, and I don't think they have [Sen.] Mike Lee's [R-Utah] either," Cruz said at the Texas Tribune Festival. (Carney, 9/24)

CQ: Collins, Cruz Cast More Doubt On GOP Health Care Bill
Republicans face an uphill climb this week to overhaul the 2010 health care law before a crucial Saturday deadline, with two more senators suggesting Sunday that they oppose a last-ditch effort to follow through on a years-long promise. Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, said on CNN that it was "difficult to envision a scenario" where she would vote for the proposal Republicans are considering, while Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, said at the Texas Tribune Festival that he does not currently support the plan. (McIntire, 9/24)

The Hill: Collins: 'Very Difficult' To Imagine Voting For ObamaCare Repeal Bill
Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine) signaled on Sunday that she is unlikely to support the latest GOP ObamaCare repeal effort, but said she hasn't made a final decision. "It's very difficult for me to envision a scenario where I would end up voting for this bill," she told CNN's "State of the Union." (Carney, 9/24)

Boston Globe: Maine's Susan Collins Weighs The Biggest Decision Of Her Career. No, It's Not About Health Care
As the clock ticks down on September, all eyes are on Maine Senator Susan Collins, whose swing vote on the latest attempt to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act in the coming days will have a major effect on whether the Republican legacy bill lives or dies. But it's another, lesser-known decision Collins is weighing that could actually be the biggest of her career: whether to run for governor. (Pindell, 9/22)

Bloomberg: Here Are The Senators To Watch On Obamacare Repeal
Senate Republican leaders are struggling to win support from holdouts in their party for what may be their last chance for a long time to pass a GOP-only repeal of Obamacare. Senator Susan Collins of Maine said Friday she's leaning against the bill because among other things it undermines protection for people with pre-existing medical conditions, according to the Portland Press Herald. "The premiums would be so high they would be unaffordable," she said. (Litvan, 9/22)

Richmond Times-Dispatch: Warner, Kaine Air Concerns About Graham-Cassidy Health Care Bill Before McCain Announces Opposition
U.S. Sens. Mark Warner and Tim Kaine, both Virginia Democrats, said Friday that

there's what they called a frightening prospect of the GOP health care bill passing next week, terming it a disaster for Medicaid and care of children, the elderly and people with disabilities. (Wilson, 9/22)

10. Friendship With GOP Health Plan's Drafter Not Enough To Sway McCain

Some in the party were hopeful that Sen. John McCain's close friendship with the bill's author, Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), would be enough to persuade the Arizona lawmaker to reverse his health care vote this time around But McCain said he could not "in good conscience" vote for the proposal.

The Associated Press: McCain's Moment: Ailing Senator Plays Spoiler Again For GOP
Longtime friends and advisers of Sen. John McCain say they're not surprised by his decision to oppose a last-ditch Republican effort to overhaul the nation's health care law. McCain objected to the legislation in part because Senate GOP leaders wanted a vote without holding hearings or debate. The Arizona senator has made a return to "regular order" in the Senate a priority since he came back to Congress following a cancer diagnosis. (Pace and Kellman, 9/25)

The New York Times: McCain Announces Opposition To Republican Health Bill, Likely Dooming It
For months, Mr. McCain has lamented a Senate legislative process that avoided hearings or formal bill-drafting procedures and excluded Democrats. On Friday, he said those tactics were intolerable. "We should not be content to pass health care legislation on a party-line basis, as Democrats did when they rammed Obamacare through Congress in 2009," Mr. McCain said. "If we do so, our success could be as short-lived as theirs when the political winds shift, as they regularly do." (Kaplan and Pear, 9/22)

The Wall Street Journal: McCain Says He Can't Support Latest GOP Senate Health Bill
A defeat for Graham-Cassidy would be a blow for President Donald Trump and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R., Ky.), who threw their support behind the last-ditch legislation just as it gained momentum that surprised even some Republicans. Mr. Trump has regularly criticized Republicans who oppose the party's health-care efforts, including in a tweet Friday morning aimed at the holdout Mr. Paul. It could also be the death knell of the GOP's seven-year quest to dismantle former President Barack Obama's signature health law, often called Obamacare. (Armour and Peterson, 9/22)

Politico: Why McCain Screwed The GOP On Obamacare Repeal — Again
Not even 24 hours after John McCain dramatically tanked a Republican effort to repeal Obamacare in late July, his best friend, Lindsey Graham, started working feverishly in

private to try again. Graham — who's never shown much interest in health care policy — quietly trekked to the White House with Sen. Bill Cassidy to try and sell President Donald Trump on their latest proposal that would transform Obamacare into a block grant program for states. (Everett and Kim, 9/22)

Columbus Dispatch: Sherrod Brown, John McCain, John Kasich All Call For Bipartisan Health-Care Solution

With GOP leaders' current hopes of repealing Obamacare dangling by a thread after Sen. John McCain made his opposition public Friday, will lawmakers now turn to the course advocated by McCain, Ohio Sen. Sherrod Brown and Gov. John Kasich: forging a bipartisan compromise? (Rowland, 9/23)

Texas Tribune: GOP Health Overhaul In Jeopardy, But Sen. Al Franken "Not Assuming A Damn Thing"

U.S. Sen. Al Franken said Friday that while Republican colleague John McCain announced his opposition to the latest Republican health care plan, Franken is not ready to declare victory. (Livingston, 9/22)

11. Trump Blasts McCain, Puts Pressure On Wavering Senators

President Donald Trump is making a push for the Graham-Cassidy bill, focusing on those lawmakers who were on the fence this summer. "Eventually, we'll win," the president says.

The New York Times: Trump Laces Into McCain Over His Opposition To Health Care Bill

President Trump on Saturday morning lashed out at Senator John McCain of Arizona for breaking with him and opposing Republicans' latest plan to roll back the Affordable Care Act, saying the senator had let his state down and been deceived by Democrats into abandoning a promise. (Davis, 9/23)

The Associated Press: Trump Trying To Turn Around GOP Holdouts On Health Bill
Unwilling to concede defeat on a bedrock GOP promise, President Donald Trump on Saturday tried to sway two Republican holdouts on the party's last-ditch health care hope while clawing at his nemesis who again has brought the "Obamacare" repeal-and-replace effort to the brink of failure. Trump appealed to Sen. Lisa Murkowski, a possible "no" vote, to swing around for the sake of Alaskans up in arms over high insurance costs, and suggested that Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul might reverse his stated opposition "for the good of the Party!" (Lucey, 9/23)

Boston Globe: Trump Says McCain 'Let Arizona Down' By Opposing The GOP Health Care Bill

President Trump continued his criticism of Senator John McCain Saturday in a series of tweets that accused the Arizona legislator of letting his state down for opposing the GOP's health care bill. (Gans, 9/23)

The Wall Street Journal: Trump Applies Late Pressure To Senators In Health-Bill Push
"Large Block Grants to States is a good thing to do. Better control & management," Mr. Trump tweeted Saturday. "Great for Arizona. McCain let his best friend L.G. down!" Mr. McCain was the second Republican to oppose the bill, following Sen. Rand Paul (R., Ky.) On Friday Sen. Susan Collins (R., Maine) said she was leaning against the legislation. Mr. Trump said Saturday that he hoped to persuade Mr. Paul to change his mind. (Peterson, 9/23)

Bloomberg: Trump Names, Shames GOP Senators As Health Bill Hangs By Thread
Trump directed tweets at Senators Rand Paul of Kentucky and John McCain of Arizona. Both have said they'll oppose the bill, meaning one more committed "no" will sink the legislation. "I know Rand Paul and I think he may find a way to get there for the good of the Party!" Trump told his 39 million followers. (Litvan and Dennis, 9/22)

The Hill: Trump Slams Democrats, McCain Over Health Care Bill
President Trump on Saturday chided Democrats who praised Sen. John McCain's (R-Ariz.) opposition to Senate Republicans' latest effort to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act. "Democrats are laughingly saying that McCain had a 'moment of courage,'" he wrote on Twitter. "Tell that to the people of Arizona who were deceived. 116% increase!" (Greenwood, 9/23)

The Hill: Key Trump Aide: ObamaCare Repeal 'Not Dead'
White House legislative affairs director Marc Short on Sunday insisted that the Republican effort to repeal ObamaCare is not dead, despite a lack of support from several key GOP senators. "No, Chris, it's not dead," Short told Chris Wallace on "Fox News Sunday" when asked if the legislation is doomed. (Shelbourne, 9/24)

The Hill: Trump On Health Care Plan: 'Eventually We'll Win'
President Trump on Sunday afternoon expressed optimism over a Republican-led effort to repeal and replace ObamaCare. Speaking to reporters on the tarmac of Morristown Municipal Airport in New Jersey, Trump took a jab at Republican leaders who have either come out against or expressed doubt over the latest GOP health-care bill. (Conradis, 9/24)

12. Cassidy Claims Coverage For Preexisting Conditions Is 'Absolutely The Same' But That's Not True

The Graham-Cassidy measure gives states flexibility, so some may not waive the protections. Others, however, might.

The Washington Post Fact Checker: Sen. Cassidy's Misleading Claim That Preexisting-Conditions 'Protection Is Absolutely The Same'

In the dispute between late-night host Jimmy Kimmel and Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-La.), one of the key authors of the long-shot GOP effort to repeal the Affordable Care Act, a key issue is whether the proposal maintains the ACA's guarantee that people with preexisting condition can obtain health insurance. That has always been one of the most popular parts of Obamacare, and President Trump has insisted he would not sign a bill without such protections. He tweeted that this version of repeal — co-sponsored by Cassidy and Sen. Lindsey O. Graham (R-S.C.) — contains such protections. (Kessler, 9/23)

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel: PolitiFact: GOP Bill Weakens Protections For Pre-Existing Conditions

U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.), one of four co-sponsors of the latest GOP health care bill, says the bill will protect people with pre-existing conditions "every bit as well as Obamacare did." PolitiFact Wisconsin finds that, by allowing states to obtain waivers, insurers could be allowed to raise rates and reduce benefits for people with pre-existing medical conditions. (Kertscher, 9/22)

The Hill: White House Aide: 'Pre-Existing Conditions Continue To Be Covered' Under ObamaCare Repeal Bill

White House legislative affairs director Marc Short stressed on Sunday that the GOP's latest ObamaCare repeal effort includes coverage for pre-existing conditions. "The ObamaCare legislation required coverage of pre-existing conditions. This legislation does not change that," Short said on CBS's "Face The Nation." (Savransky, 9/24)

The Hill: Kimmel Consulted With Schumer On Health-Care Details: Report

Comedian Jimmy Kimmel consulted with Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer's (D-N.Y.) office on details surrounding the health-care debate, The Daily Beast reported Friday. Schumer's office "provided technical guidance and info about the bill, as well as stats from various think tanks and experts on the effects of" the legislation, a source told the outlet. (Manchester, 9/22)

Arizona Republic: Jimmy Kimmel Thanks McCain On Twitter For Health Care Vote
After the Arizona Sen. John McCain confirmed Friday he would not support the GOP's latest health-care bill, late-night host Jimmy Kimmel thanked the senator on Twitter, capping Kimmel's high-profile week of publicly opposing the bill. (McCrory, 9/22)

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13. Beyond Preexisting Conditions And Medicaid: How GOP Plan Would Affect Americans' Health Care

Media outlets take a look at how the Graham-Cassidy plan would alter the country's health care landscape.

NPR: Key Flash Points In The Health Care Overhaul Bill

If Senate Republicans vote to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act this week, it would affect the health care of pretty much every American. Here's a recap of four key flash points in the health overhaul debate with links to NPR coverage over the past six months, and our chart laying out how the Graham-Cassidy bill under consideration in the Senate addresses those issues compared with the Affordable Care Act. (Shute, 9/24)

Kaiser Health News: GOP Health Bill's Changes Go Far Beyond Preexisting Conditions
The latest GOP effort to "repeal and replace" the Affordable Care Act is getting a lot of attention, even if its passage seems unlikely. But there is far more to the measure than its changes to rules regarding preexisting health conditions. In fact, the bill proposed by Sens. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) and Bill Cassidy (R-La.) would disrupt the existing health system more than any of the measures considered so far this year, according to supporters and critics. (Rovner, 9/22)

The New York Times: Three Ways The New Republican Health Bill Differs From Past Repeal Efforts

At first glance, the latest Republican plan to repeal the Affordable Care Act might appear similar to earlier bills. It would repeal the individual mandate to purchase insurance and get rid of certain subsidies for out-of-pocket health expenses. But the measure has important differences from the three bills that failed to pass the Senate in July and the one that passed the House in May. (Park, 9/22)

14. It's Not Just Blue States That Will Be Hurt Under GOP Plan -- Trump Country Would Take Hit Too

Of the 30 states Donald Trump carried in his presidential victory, 16 would lose federal health care money under the bill to dismantle Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act. But California will be one of the states that's hurt the most. Media outlets take a look at the impact in Texas, Washington, New Hampshire and Connecticut as well.

The Associated Press: Memo To GOP: Red States Also Among Losers In Health Bill
Memo to Republican senators: Many of the states President Donald Trump won last year would lose significant federal financing under the last-ditch Republican health care bill headed for a possible showdown in the Senate this week. Among states expected to lose are Arizona, Florida, Kentucky, and Ohio, where cuts could swell the number of uninsured people. That has political implications for Republicans girding for congressional midterm elections next year, as well as for the next presidential race in 2020. That year is when the biggest spending reductions from the legislation by GOP Sens. Lindsey Graham and Bill Cassidy would start taking effect. (Alonso-Zaldivar, 9/25)

Los Angeles Times: California Would Take Biggest Hit Under Senate Republicans' Latest Obamacare Repeal Plan

California, which has used the Affordable Care Act to extend health protections to millions of its residents and cut in half the number of people without health insurance, stands to lose more than any other state under the latest Republican plan to roll back the 2010 law. The GOP plan, which Senate leaders want to bring to a vote this week, would slash more than \$100 billion in federal funding for the state over the next decade and tens of billions more in the years that follow. (Levey, 9/24)

Kaiser Health News: A Tale Of Two States: California, Texas And The Latest ACA Repeal Bid

The GOP's latest attempt to repeal the Affordable Care Act wobbled on Friday as Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) said he could not support it. But the bill known as Graham-Cassidy isn't dead yet. And whatever its fate, the long-held Republican goal it embodies — to fundamentally change how the government funds Medicaid — will survive. Graham-Cassidy would dramatically redistribute federal funds to states. And, generally, states that expanded Medicaid — like California — stand to lose billions of dollars as that money is doled out to states that didn't — like Texas. (Dembosky and Lopez, 9/22)

Bloomberg: At Least 21 Million Would Lose Coverage In GOP Bill, Brookings Says
At least 21 million fewer Americans would have health-care coverage from 2020 to 2026 under the Senate Republicans' latest plan to repeal and replace parts of Obamacare, according to an estimate by the Brookings Institution. The number "likely underestimates the reductions in insurance coverage" because it doesn't take into

account difficulties states may face setting up their own health systems, said the nonprofit policy group, which has been supportive of the Affordable Care Act. (Edney, 9/22)

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Seattle Times: Washington State Would Lose \$10B Through 2026 With Latest Obamacare Repeal Plan, Study Says

The billions of dollars in cuts to Medicaid proposed in Senate Republicans' latest and perhaps final attempt to repeal the Affordable Care Act would be devastating to children across Washington, U.S. Sen. Maria Cantwell said Friday. Named after its lead sponsors, Republican Sens. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina and Bill Cassidy of Louisiana, the repeal bill would end the ACA's Medicaid expansion, which has provided insurance to about 600,000 people in Washington. It would also end the federal subsidies that help people buy private insurance. (Gutman, 9/22)

Concord Monitor: HHS Head: GOP Health Bill Could Result In \$820M N.H. Medicaid Cut

New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services Commissioner Jeffrey Meyers predicted a sharp financial toll on the state's Medicaid program if the federal Graham-Cassidy health care bill passes, and warned of funding shortages that could result from the bill's block grant system. Speaking at a Monitor editorial board meeting Wednesday, Meyers said that the proposed legislation could cause a loss of about \$820 million in Medicaid funding between 2020 and 2026, citing calculations made by his office. (DeWitt, 9/23)

The CT Mirror: CT Says It Would Lose \$7 Billion Under Teetering ACA Overhaul Plan
Federal healthcare funding to Connecticut would be reduced by about \$7 billion, and "dramatic numbers" of individuals would lose coverage or have it reduced between 2020 and 2026 under the latest Republican proposal to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, the state's budget office said Friday. (Rigg, 9/22)

Detroit Free Press: Opponents Gather In Detroit To Oppose Latest Obamacare Repeal Attempt

The bill would also end the Medicaid expansion that 31 states, including Michigan, and Washington, D.C., took advantage of under Obamacare and overhaul the funding for traditional Medicaid. In Michigan, more than 670,000 people signed up for the Medicaid expansion program. "The current bill will be devastating for patients and Michiganders who are finally getting health care they need and deserve," said Wright Lassiter, president and CEO of the Henry Ford Health System. (Gray, 9/22)

Arizona Republic: Arizona's Medicaid Program Would Lose \$10.4 Billion Under Senate Plan

The state legislative report issued this week predicts Arizona's Medicaid program would lose \$10.4 billion from 2020 through 2026 under the health-care bill introduced by Sens. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., and Bill Cassidy, R-La., when compared with funding authorized under the current health-care law, the Affordable Care Act. (Alltucker, 9/22)

15. Graham-Cassidy Bill Did What Other GOP Attempts Didn't: Unified Industry Opposition

Criticisms of the bill from insurers, medical groups and hospital go beyond ideological or political differences. These organizations really think it just won't work.

The New York Times: Why The Latest Health Bill Is Teetering: It Might Not Work
Health insurers, who had been strangely quiet for much of the year, came off the sidelines to criticize it. Many state Medicaid directors could not stomach it, either. For months now, proposals to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act have risen and fallen in the House and the Senate, almost always uniting health care providers and patient advocacy groups in opposition but winning support among conservatives, including Republican policy makers. But the version drafted by Senators Lindsey Graham of South Carolina and Bill Cassidy of Louisiana — and hastily brought into the spotlight last week — went further. (Stolberg and Pear, 9/23)

The Washington Post: Here's A List Of Medical Groups Opposing The Cassidy-Graham Health-Care Bill

One factor in the bill's apparent (although not yet certain) demise: Cassidy-Graham has mobilized nearly the entire American health-care community in opposition. Dozens of national advocacy groups representing patients, doctors, insurers and hospitals have issued strongly worded condemnations of the proposal. The American Medical Association warns it violates doctors' oath to "first do no harm." Kaiser Permanente says that any changes to health-care law should "increase access to high-quality, affordable care and coverage for as many people as possible" and that "the Cassidy-Graham bill does not meet any of those tests." (Ingraham, 9/22)

The Hill: Medical Groups Urge Lawmakers To Reject Graham-Cassidy Bill

Leading medical associations are calling on lawmakers to reject Republicans' latest attempt to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act. In a statement issued Saturday, several doctor and hospital trade groups, including the American Medical Association and the Federation of American Hospitals said that the bill introduced by Sens. Lindsey

Graham (R-S.C.) and Bill Cassidy (R-La.) ultimately falls short of key benchmarks, weakening patient protections and the individual insurance market. (Greenwood, 9/23)

Bloomberg: Hospitals, Insurers Rise As McCain Opposes GOP Obamacare Repeal
Hospital and health insurance stocks moved upward Friday after Republican Senator John McCain said he would withhold his vote from a GOP proposal to repeal much of Obamacare, potentially dooming efforts to bring the measure to the floor. The Republican proposal would cut planned federal spending on health care by \$215 billion through 2026, according to consulting firm Avalere Health. It would also end a requirement that all Americans have insurance coverage. Both policies helped expand insurance coverage to millions of Americans, providing insurers with more clients and hospitals with more paying customers. (Rausch, 9/22)

Meanwhile, Americans are also voicing their opposition to the measure —

The Hill: Poll: Americans Favor ObamaCare To Graham-Cassidy
Americans favor ObamaCare to the Graham-Cassidy health-care legislation by more than 20 points, according to a new ABC News/Washington Post poll. Fifty-six percent of Americans surveyed said they preferred the current health-care law to the latest repeal-and-replace legislation put forth by Senate Republicans, while only 33 percent of those polled said they supported the new legislation. (Manchester, 9/22)

NPR: The Affordable Care Act Expanded Coverage To Many: Here Are Five
As the nation has debated the GOP proposals to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, NPR member station reporters have been talking to people around the country about how the proposed changes in the health law would affect them. Here are five of those stories. (Grayson, 9/23)

16. What's With All The Zeal To Resurrect Repeal Efforts? Some Hint At Backlash From GOP Donors

Sources say Sen. Cory Gardner of Colorado, who is in charge of his party's midterm re-election push, warned about the impact to the party's coffers if lawmakers fail to make movement on their major promises.

The New York Times: Behind New Obamacare Repeal Vote: = 2Furious' G.O.P. Donors

As more than 40 subdued Republican senators lunched on Chick-fil-A at a closed-door session last week, Senator Cory Gardner of Colorado painted a dire picture for his colleagues. Campaign fund-raising was drying up, he said, because of widespread disappointment among donors over the inability of the Republican Senate to repeal the

Affordable Care Act or do much of anything else. Mr. Gardner is in charge of his party's midterm re-election push, and he warned that donors of all stripes were refusing to contribute another penny until the struggling majority produced some concrete results. (Hulse, 9/22)

The Hill: GOP Senator: Repealing ObamaCare 'Has Nothing To Do With Politics'
Sen. Cory Gardner (R-Colo.) said Sunday the GOP push to get an ObamaCare repeal bill passed has nothing to do with politics. "This has nothing to do with politics. It has nothing to do with donors." Gardner said on CBS's "Face The Nation," when asked about whether there was a rush to pass the ObamaCare repeal bill for political and not substantive reasons. (Savransky, 9/24)

ADMINISTRATION NEWS

17. Private Jets For Tom Price Grounded While Inspector General Investigates Travel Spending

"We've heard the criticism. We've heard the concerns. We take that very seriously and have taken it to heart," says Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price about reports that he has spent \$300,000 on private airplanes for government travel.

The Associated Press: Investigators Reviewing HHS Chief's Private Charter Flights
Federal investigators are examining Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price's recent use of costly charter flights on the taxpayers' dime for official business. The HHS inspector general's office said Friday the agency is reviewing Price's charters to see if they violated government travel regulations, which generally require officials to minimize costs. (Alonso-Zaldivar, 9/22)

Politico: Trump: 'We're Looking Into' Price's Use Of Private Planes
President Donald Trump on Sunday said his administration is looking into Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price's use of private planes during his tenure in the Cabinet. "As far as Secretary Price is concerned, that's different. We're looking into it," Trump told reporters in Washington, according to a pool report. He was answering a question that also pertained to Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin. (Griffiths, 9/24)

The Hill: Price Halts Use Of Private Jets During Investigations
Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Tom Price will cease using private charter jets to travel around the country in the midst of an investigation from the HHS Inspector General office on his travel expenditures. "We've heard the criticism. We've heard the concerns. We take that very seriously and have taken it to heart," Price told Fox News Saturday. "I don't think there will be any charter trips until this review is

complete. I think that's appropriate because of the concerns that we've heard."
(Bowden, 9/23)

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Politico: Tom Price To Halt Taxpayer-Funded Travel On Private Jets
Price continued to take charter jets after a POLITICO investigation identified that the HHS secretary had been chartering private planes to conduct official business for months. The cost of his trips this past week was \$56,500, according to a federal contract. (Diamond, 9/23)

The Hill: HHS Employees Had To Watch Video About Dangers Of Leaking Information: Report

Employees at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) were reportedly required to watch a 31 minute video on the dangers of leaking information as a part of training session aimed at combating leaks within the department. The video, which is dubbed "Insider Threat," is narrated by the HHS Assistant Secretary for Administration John Bardis, according to BuzzFeed News. (Manchester, 9/22)

CQ: HHS Inspector General Reviewing Price's Travel

The inspector general of the Health and Human Services Department said Friday it will investigate the expensive use of private planes by department Secretary Tom Price. Democratic lawmakers requested that the inspector general look into Price's use of private aircraft to travel the country for meetings, which has cost taxpayers at least \$300,000 in recent months, according to reporting by Politico, which broke the news of Price's travels. (Siddons, 9/22)

POLITICO Pro: New Details Cast Doubt On Why Tom Price Needed A Private Jet
HHS Secretary Tom Price has been taking private jets because an unreliable commercial flight once forced him to cancel an important meeting, an HHS spokesperson says, part of his agenda to meet with average Americans outside of Washington. But the flight in question — to a two-day industry conference at a Ritz-Carlton hotel in southern California — didn't get off the ground on a day when storms virtually shut down air traffic in the Washington region, preventing even private jets from getting out. (Diamond, 9/22)

18. Administration To Shut Down ACA Enrollment Website For 12 Hours On Most Sundays

The administration, which has come under fire from supporters of the Affordable Care Act, who say it is taking intentional steps to undermine the law's performance, says the outages are for maintenance purposes.

The Wall Street Journal: Healthcare.Gov To Shut Down During Parts Of Enrollment Period For Maintenance

The Trump administration plans to shut down healthcare.gov, a website consumers use to sign up for the Affordable Care Act, for 12 hours on nearly every Sunday of the coming ACA enrollment season. The outages, which the administration says are for maintenance, will occur from midnight through noon on every Sunday other than Dec. 10. This year's enrollment season, which the administration has shortened to half the length of previous years, will run from Nov. 1 through Dec. 15 for states that use the federal marketplace. (Hackman, 9/23)

The Hill: HHS Plans Hours-Long Shutdowns Of ObamaCare Site During Enrollment Period

A spokesperson for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services said the maintenance periods were planned ahead of time. "Maintenance outages are regularly scheduled on HealthCare.gov every year during open enrollment. This year is no different," the spokesperson said. "The maintenance schedule was provided in advance this year in order to accommodate requests from certified application assisters. (Carter, 9/22)

Kaiser Health News: Sunday Hours: Obamacare Website To Be Shut Down For Portion Of Most Weekends

The Trump administration has come under attack from critics who say that it is intentionally undermining the Affordable Care Act, through regulatory actions. It shortened the enrollment period, withdrew money for advertising and cut the budget for navigator groups, which help people shop for plans. (Galewitz, 9/22)

COVERAGE AND ACCESS

19. Sanders Champions Single-Player Plan To Receptive California Crowd: 'We're Going To Win This Fight'

Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) also slammed the Republicans' efforts to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act. California gubernatorial candidate and current Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom calls on the state's Legislature to move its single-payer bill along.

The Associated Press: Sanders Slams GOP, Touts Universal Health Care In California
Sen. Bernie Sanders pilloried Republican efforts to overhaul the health care system and touted his own Medicare for all plan Friday before an effusive California audience that welcomed him on stage with chants of "Run, Bernie, Run!" Sanders' speech to the influential California nurses' union in San Francisco came shortly after Republican Sen. John McCain announced he would vote "no" on the latest GOP effort to roll back President Barack Obama's health care overhaul law. Sanders praised McCain for following his conscience, but he said the fight to preserve — and expand — access to health care is far from over. (9/22)

KQED: Is Single Payer Becoming A Litmus Test For Democrats?
Single-payer health care has long been the goal of progressive Democrats in California. In 2006 and 2008, the Legislature passed bills to create such a system here, but Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger vetoed both of them. This time around, the nurses union seems intent on not letting this moment slip away. (Shafer, 9/22)

Boston Globe: Bernie Sanders Wants Single-Payer. So Why Is He Going To Defend The ACA On TV?
After the Senate's Republican majority failed again to repeal the ACA in July, Sanders seemed to think it was time to move on, proposing a single-payer health care system that he had championed during the presidential primaries. But on Monday, Sanders will be back defending the ACA — this time in a live CNN debate against South Carolina Senator Lindsey Graham and Louisiana Senator Bill Cassidy, the architects of the latest version of a Republican health care bill. (Jacobs, 9/22)

Sacramento Bee: Gavin Newsom Endorses Senate Bill 562
Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom challenged California's Democratic-run Legislature to pass sweeping universal, government-run health care next year, pledging that if the bill stalls again, he will make it a priority regardless of what happens in Washington. (Cadelago and Hart, 9/22)

San Jose Mercury News: Gavin Newsom: "Time To Move" California Single-Payer Bill
"It's time to move 562 along," he said to cheers and a standing ovation at the California Nurses Association conference in San Francisco. "It's time to do that now." While he didn't explicitly endorse the bill in its current form, Newsom articulated his strongest support for it so far and vowed a "firm and absolute commitment" to pass universal health care if he's elected governor next year. "No one is saying it's perfect or complete, but that's not the point. That's what the legislative process is all about," he said. (Tolan, 9/22)

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20. Time Quickly Ticking On Funding For Children's Health Care As Hill Focuses On ACA Instead

The Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which has bipartisan support, has been shelved behind the GOP effort to replace the Affordable Care Act. But federal funding will begin to dry up Oct. 1 and states are warning lawmakers they will need funds quickly.

CQ: As Congress Flounders, Millions of Kids Risk Losing Insurance
Minnesota officials knew they would exhaust Children's Health Insurance Program money by the end of this year. Then they discovered the news was worse: The state would likely be out of money for coverage of low-income children and pregnant women by the end of September. And it became increasingly clear that Congress was probably not going to meet a deadline to help. The state will have "to take extraordinary measures to ensure that coverage continues beyond October 1, 2017, if Congress does not act," warned Minnesota Department of Human Services Commissioner Emily Piper in a Sept. 13 letter pleading with lawmakers for "urgent" action. Minnesota is the first state to hit a funding crisis but others are on the cusp. (Adams, 9/25)

Modern Healthcare: A Battle For Children's Health Coverage On Two Fronts
As Sept. 30 approaches, pediatric providers are grappling with the potential loss of funding for two programs responsible for huge gains in health insurance coverage for children. Combined, the Children's Health Insurance Program and Medicaid, both of which provide health coverage to uninsured children in families that can't afford it elsewhere, cover an estimated 46 million children. (Livingston, 9/22)

Georgia Health News: Insured Children Increase In Georgia And Nationwide, Report Says
Nationwide, 95.5 percent of children had health insurance in 2016, which is a historic high, according to the report released Friday by Georgetown University Center for Children and Families. ... The authors linked the increase in coverage nationally to the implementation of the 2010 Affordable Care Act. (Miller, 9/23)

Atlanta Journal-Constitution: Key Health Programs At Risk Of Lapsing As Obamacare Repeal Dominates D.C. Debate
Nearly one hundred and fifty million dollars to keep Georgia hospitals' indigent care

afloat. Funding for the PeachCare program that along with Medicaid covers about half of Georgia's kids. ... Those are some things that Congress has not taken care of 30 or even, in some cases, clarified its position on — as deadlines and expirations approach at the end of September. (Hallerman, 9/23)

Kaiser Health News: Facebook Live: What's Happening With The Children's Health Insurance Program?

KHN chief Washington correspondent Julie Rovner and Bruce Lesley, a Capitol Hill veteran who heads First Focus, a bipartisan children's health advocacy group, break down the current state of play on CHIP reauthorization and other congressional issues. (9/22)

QUALITY

21. As Heat Rose In Fla. Nursing Home, Staff Asked For Help But Few Understood The Emergency

Florida officials say they didn't have any indication from the nursing home where 11 people would die that residents were in distress. But records show that phone calls went out to the power company, the governor and local officials and a facility that shared the building reported that the conditions were "adversely affecting patients," according to The New York Times.

The New York Times: At Florida Nursing Home, Many Calls For Help, But None That Made A Difference

The emergency room workers at Memorial Regional Hospital rushed the first patient to Room 9, which was devoted to the hope and practice of arresting death. They threaded fluid lines into her veins and readied a breathing tube. Even through gloves, they could feel the heat corseting the 84-year-old woman's body. As they prepared to insert a catheter, they saw what looked like steam rising from her legs. (Gabler, Fink and Yee, 9/23)

Miami Herald: Hurricane Irma: Florida Gov. Scott Did Not Keep Nursing Home Voicemails

Voicemails left on Florida Gov. Rick Scott's cellphone by employees of the Hollywood nursing home where 11 died in the post-Hurricane Irma heat have been deleted, according to the governor's office. (Ostroff, 9/24)

Forbes: How Trumpcare's Medicaid Block Grants Hurt Hurricane Victims

The Republican-led Senate proposal to give each state a fixed block grant of federal

money to pay for Medicaid coverage for poor Americans doesn't account for "increased financial stress" states face during economic downturns and natural disasters, insurers and governors opposed to the legislation say. ... But Graham-Cassidy's block grants "do not accommodate the counter cyclical nature of Medicaid and the inability of states to shoulder increased financial stress during economic downturns," Medicaid Health Plans Of America CEO Jeff Myers wrote Sen. Cassidy last week. MHPA members include Aetna, Centene, Cigna and UnitedHealth Group. (Japsen, 9/24)

PUBLIC HEALTH AND EDUCATION

22. Despite Flu Vaccine's Possible Link To Miscarriage, Experts Implore Pregnant Women To Still Get The Shot

While scientists look into the potential link, experts also say it is still very important for women to protect themselves and their babies from the flu. In other public health news: tetanus and other world health problems; mosquitoes; Zika; brain injuries and violence; restrictions on blood donors; and a quadruplet-success story.

NPR: A Flu Shot Is Still 'Essential' For Pregnant Women, Obstetricians Say
Flu symptoms can be more severe when you're pregnant, landing women in the hospital, threatening their lives and even leading to preterm birth or miscarriage. The virus is a risk to the woman and the baby. So, it's particularly important that people who are pregnant get the flu vaccine. And it's also important that the effects of those vaccines be studied in pregnant women. (Hersher, 9/25)

The New York Times: World Health Officials Describe Progress Against Tetanus, H.I.V. And Malaria

Infant and maternal tetanus was officially eliminated from the Americas this year, the Pan American Health Organization announced on Thursday. At one time, the infection killed about 10,000 newborns annually in the Western Hemisphere; tetanus still kills about 35,000 infants around the world. It was one of several significant global health advances, including new programs against malaria and H.I.V., announced last week in conjunction with the meeting of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. (McNeil, 9/22)

Los Angeles Times: Mosquitoes Spread Deadly Diseases, And Public Health Experts Hope To Fight Back With This New Emoji

Mosquitoes are more than a spoiler of backyard barbecues. They threaten more than half the world's population with their disease-spreading bites. In fact, mosquitoes are deadlier — by far = 2 than sharks and snakes. They are the incubator and chief disseminator of malaria, dengue and yellow fevers, as well as newer scourges like the

West Nile and Zika viruses. Their numbers explode with floods, hurricanes and climate change, allowing them to outnumber every animal on Earth during their peak breeding season. Public-health officials fret about them 24/7. (Healy, 9/22)

Tampa Bay Times: Whatever Happened To The Zika Epidemic?

The state Health Department counts only 180 Zika infections in Florida so far in 2017, on track to come in well below the 1,456 cases reported all of last year. The vast majority are travel-related cases brought to Florida by people who came from somewhere else, like Zika hotbed areas in Central and South America or the Caribbean, already infected with the virus. (Griffin, 9/25)

The New York Times: Yes, Aaron Hernandez Suffered Brain Injury. But That May Not Explain His Violence.

The brain damage was so severe that scientists all but gasped. Aaron Hernandez, the former New England Patriots tight end who was convicted of murder, killed himself in prison in April at age 27. An autopsy revealed that he had brain injuries akin to those seen in afflicted former players in their 60s, researchers announced on Thursday. (Carey, 9/22)

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The New York Times: Movie's Ads Protest Rules Restricting Gay Men From Donating Blood

The last "Saw" movie, released by Lionsgate in 2010, was advertised as "the final chapter." But you didn't think a franchise with roughly \$1 billion in worldwide ticket sales was going to die that easily, did you? In true horror film fashion, the series will resume its torture killings on Oct. 27 with an R-rated eighth installment titled "Jigsaw." Less expected: Lionsgate's decision to promote "Jigsaw" by shaking an angry fist at America's blood-donation regulations. (Barnes, 9/24)

The Washington Post: Quadruplets Were Born So Premature They Barely Survived. Now They're Off To Kindergarten

The Larson quadruplets started kindergarten this month in Lima, N.Y. For any 5-year-old, this would be a normal event. But for Cooper, Brody, Ashlyn and Kylie, it was a hard-fought achievement. The quadruplets were born at 25 weeks and four days, said their mother, Courtney Larson, 31. (A normal pregnancy usually lasts 40 weeks.) (Ali, 9/24)

STATE WATCH

23. State Highlights: Nurses At Mass. Hospital Plan One-Day Strike; Calif. Free Health Clinic Draws 1,500 Patients

Media outlets report on news from Massachusetts, California, Missouri, Maryland and Virginia.

Boston Globe: Nurses At Pittsfield Hospital Plan One-Day Strike

The Massachusetts Nurses Association is planning its third labor strike of the year, this time at Berkshire Medical Center in Pittsfield. The union, which represents about 800 nurses at Berkshire, said Friday that it would stage a one-day strike on Oct. 3 to protest what it calls unfair labor practices. (Dayal McCluskey, 9/22)

Sacramento Bee: Free Health Clinic Draws 1,500 People

While the number of uninsured Californians has decreased from 8.6 percent to 7.3 percent in 2016, according to U.S. Census figures, millions still can't afford health insurance or the costly copayments and deductibles that come with their policies. At the California CareForce clinic, about half reported having no insurance, 20 percent said their insurance didn't cover their needs and 10 percent were insured but couldn't afford the cost of their deductible. (Sullivan, 9/24)

Los Angeles Times: Head Of L.A. County's Health System, One Of The Largest In The Country, Announces Departure

Dr. Mitchell Katz, tapped by Los Angeles County seven years ago to lead the nation's second-largest public healthcare system out of a period of instability and mismanagement, has announced he will leave his post at the end of the year. Katz oversees the county's Health Agency, the umbrella health organization with a budget of approximately \$8 billion and 32,000 employees. He will return to his native New York to take care of his two elderly parents and to become chief executive of the New York City Health and Hospitals Corp., which operates the city's public hospitals, clinics and nursing homes. (Agrawal, 9/23)

Los Angeles Times: West Nile Virus Has Killed 8 Californians This Year. In Parts Of L.A. County, The Risk Is Especially High

Julie Shepherd ended up in the hospital earlier this month after her neighbor found her on the floor of her West Covina home, unable to move. Shepherd, 84, was paralyzed and had lost the ability to speak. Doctors diagnosed her illness as West Nile virus. Humans contract the virus through a mosquito bite. There's no vaccine or cure for the disease, so Shepherd's family could only wait to see if she recovered on her own. (Karlamangla, 9/23)

CQ: Planned Parenthood Asks Court to Block Missouri Abortion Law

A Planned Parenthood group asked the Supreme Court on Friday to reverse a lower court ruling that it says would allow Missouri to enforce requirements that would keep three of the state's five abortion clinics shuttered. Comprehensive Health of Planned Parenthood Great Plains and others, in an application to the Supreme Court, wrote that it obtained a preliminary injunction against the requirements: abortion providers must have admitting privileges with a local hospital, and be licensed as ambulatory surgical centers. (Ruger, 9/22)

USA Today: White House, Congress Could Take Helicopter To Walter Reed If Approved

A disagreement between the state of Maryland and the federal government is preventing the use of Walter Reed National Military Medical Center as a Washington-area trauma center, eliminating the potential for an alternative to the troubled MedStar Washington Hospital Center. Maryland emergency services officials quietly rebuffed Walter Reed's proposal in July to start treating civilian trauma patients, citing the needs of nearby civilian hospitals, although local emergency rooms are overcrowded and the area has a higher-than-usual risk of terrorist attacks. (9/24)

The Baltimore Sun: Yumi Hogan Launches Art Therapy Program At UM Children's Hospital

[Artist-in-residence Marty] Weishaar was hired this summer as the University of Maryland hospital's first artist in residence with funding from the Yumi C.A.R.E.S. Foundation, a nonprofit started by Maryland first lady Yumi Hogan. An artist who has made art therapy her key issue, Hogan has sold her own paintings at fundraisers to benefit art therapy programs. She started the program at the children's hospital, because her husband, Gov. Larry Hogan, was treated for non-Hodgkins lymphoma at the medical system shortly after taking office in 2015. During his stay, the Hogans were inspired by pediatric patients and their families who showed "optimism and positive energy," despite dealing with grave illnesses, Yumi Hogan said via e-mail. (McDaniels, 9/25)

Richmond Times-Dispatch: Insurer Prepares To Launch Program To Improve Community Health In Richmond

The Bold Goal project is intended to make the communities in which it is launched — only seven so far — healthier by addressing the various issues that influence health, from diabetes and depression to food insecurity and loneliness. ... The ultimate "bold goal" of the program is to improve Richmond's health within five years. (O'Connor, 9/24)

San Jose Mercury News: Depression: Major Study Of College Freshmen Kicks Off At UCLA

Called the Depression Grand Challenge, UCLA's initiative — which seeks to cut the incidence of depression worldwide in half by 2050 — is launching the screenings as new students move into their dorms and prepare for the first day of classes on Thursday. (Seipel, 9/22)

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

24. Parsing The Plan: Graham-Cassidy Is A 'Horror' And 'Legislative Malpractice'

In between what appears to be a tendency among editorial writers to give the GOP repeal-and-replace plan a grim review, one writer offers a defense.

The Washington Post: Avoiding A Health-Care Horror

It is difficult to decide which is the worst aspect of the Republicans' latest try at repealing Obamacare: the irresponsibility, the cruelty or the lies. And it is impossible to ignore that the climax of this battle will take place under the shadow of President Trump's shameful, racially charged attacks on prominent African American athletes. Once again, Trump has demonstrated his lack of seriousness about the responsibilities of his office, his autocratic habit of demonizing dissent, and his willingness to play racial politics to divide and distract. (E.J. Dionne Jr., 9/24)

The New York Times: The Health Care Cul-De-Sac

Before John McCain put yet another Republican health care plan on life support on Friday, I was going to do with the Graham-Cassidy legislation what I've done with previous Republican bills, and weigh the plausible ideas that it contains against its hastily rigged-up architecture and predictable G.O.P. stinginess. But sometimes, when a party has spent most of a year producing health care bills that excite almost nobody and that even the senators voting for them can't effectively defend, it's worth stepping back and thinking about our national priorities. (Ross Douthat, 9/23)

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Boston Globe: Latest Health Care Bill Is Legislative Malpractice

In a last-ditch effort to repeal the Affordable Care Act, Republican Senators Lindsey Graham and Bill Cassidy are offering a policy mirage. ... This 11th-hour ploy constitutes gross legislative malpractice. (Jon Kingsdale, 9/25)

The New York Times: One Way For G.O.P. To Achieve Some Repeal Goals? It's Already Part Of Obamacare

On Friday, Senator John McCain of Arizona announced that he would not support the latest Republican push to overhaul the health care system. He didn't disapprove of the objectives of the bill, but to its process, which was too rushed and partisan, he said in a statement: "A bill of this impact requires a bipartisan approach." Mr. McCain's vote most likely dooms the current Obamacare repeal effort, which can afford to lose the votes of only two Republican senators. (Senator Rand Paul of Kentucky and Senator Susan Collins of Maine are generally regarded as no votes as well.) But there is, in fact, a bipartisan effort that could help Congress achieve many of the goals that the recent bill's authors say they hope to accomplish. The catch: It would be hard for Republicans to call it Obamacare repeal. (Margot Sanger-Katz, 9/23)

Los Angeles Times: GOP Health Bill: Whatever Happened To Expertise?

A long list of healthcare experts says the Republican bill to dismantle most of President Obama's health insurance program would be a disaster. The American Medical Assn. is against it. Insurance providers are against it. Patient groups are against it. Sen. Bill Cassidy's bill, coauthored with Sen. Lindsey Graham, would cut federal spending on Medicaid by amounts one consultant called "jaw-dropping." If the bill passes, 21 million fewer people would have health insurance in 2026 than under current law, according to a study by the Brookings Institution and USC. To which Cassidy says, in effect: Pay no attention to the experts. (Doyle McManus, 9/24)

Roll Call: Another Health Care Bill, Another Health Care Biff

Maybe we have finally established a lasting legislative principle for both parties: Don't ever again try to pass major health care legislation using parliamentary gimmicks to avoid a filibuster. The Democrats, under Barack Obama, followed this route in 2010 after they lost their filibuster-proof Senate majority when Republican Scott Brown unexpectedly won the special election to fill Ted Kennedy's Senate seat. As a result, final tinkering and technical improvements could not be made in the Obamacare legislation using a House-Senate conference. What the Senate Republicans have been attempting is far worse. (Walter Shapiro, 9/25)

Forbes: Ten Reasons Why Every State Should Welcome The Graham/Cassidy/Heller/Johnson Health Reform Bill

Three states – California, New York and Massachusetts -- are receiving 37 percent of all Obamacare funds, according to a group of Republican senators. As an example of this inequity, Pennsylvania has nearly twice the population of Massachusetts, but it receives less than half as much Obamacare money. The senators propose to radically change that distribution by giving each state Obamacare funds in the form of a block grant. Eventually, each state's share of the total would equal its share of the country's

poor and near-poor population. That means the people who are the principal target of Obamacare funding will have access to the same federal resources – regardless of where they live. (John C. Goodman, 9/18)

The Washington Post: The Real Reason Health Care In America Is A Mess
Until Donald Trump briefly applied himself to the subject, “nobody knew that health care could be so complicated.” President Van Winkle said this in February 2017. The wonder of discovery is a delight to behold no matter how late in life it awakens. In fact, everyone with a chronic disease in the United States knows health care is complicated. Rich or poor, young or old, their illnesses open their eyes to the fact that the so-called health-care industry, which amounts to roughly one-sixth of the U.S. economy, is not an industry at all. It is a chaotic crossroads of many different industries and professions, often in fierce competition, each adapted to its own culture and pursuing its own business model. (David Von Drehle, 9/23)

USA Today: Trump Voter Who Survived Cancer: Graham-Cassidy Health Bill Worst By Far

The last Democrat I voted for was Jimmy Carter. The last Republican I voted for was Donald Trump. After the past eight months, I am now a health care voter. My story, and my family’s story, is like so many others. In 2008, after a 20-year career in health care, I became another statistic in the number of uninsured Americans and no longer had a job or employer-provided health care. I had followed the American dream and started my own small business. I am a barber in Tennessee and I love it. I was able to get insurance through my wife’s job. (Dennis Wallace, 9/25)

The Washington Post: McCain Shows How Pathetic His GOP Colleagues Are
At a rally for Sen. Luther Strange (R-Ala.) on Friday night, President Trump claimed Sen. John McCain’s (R-Ariz.) decision to vote no on the Cassidy-Graham health-care bill was “an unexpected thing.” If so, Trump is oblivious and his legislative liaisons are rotten at their jobs. McCain’s decision was unexpected only if one hadn’t been paying attention or hadn’t taken him seriously when he nixed the prior version of Trumpcare. (Jennifer Rubin, 9/24)

Arizona Republic: John McCain Ignores Doug Ducey (Again) On Graham Cassidy Bill
Sen. John McCain on Friday announced he won’t be jumping on the Senate Republicans’ bullet train to destinations unknown (a.k.a. Graham-Cassidy.) McCain’s opposition will likely kill yet another fast-track plan to repeal and replace Obamacare. (Laurie Roberts, 9/22)

25. Perspectives On Single-Payer: Is It A Pipe Dream Or Is The GOP Repeal-And-Replace Plan Priming The Pump?

Editorials from a variety of news outlets offer different thoughts on the current single-payer health plan being advanced by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and whether it is picking up momentum.

New York Magazine: How Graham-Cassidy Would Make Single-Payer More Likely
Perhaps the oddest thing about the last-ditch Republican plan to repeal Obamacare is that it is being sold not as a repeal of Obamacare — which is popular — but instead as a rebuke to a law that does not yet exist. “If you want a single-payer health-care system, this is your worst nightmare,” Lindsey Graham has boasted of his plan. ☞
“Hell no to Berniecare.” Graham’s weird promise that his plan “ends single-payer health care” has somehow taken hold, to the point where Republicans appear to believe it would foreclose even public debate on left-wing alternatives. The bill “stops us from having conversation in the future about Medicare for all,” claims Senator Tim Scott. (Jonathan Chait, 9/19)

USA Today: Focus On Obamacare, Not Single-Payer Pipe Dreams

Democrats have long suffered from an inability to present messages that are simple, appealing and understandable. That is one of the biggest reasons Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont has had so much success. In his overly simplistic world, there is virtually no problem of economics or federal spending that isn’t the consequence of the rich getting richer and that can’t be addressed with higher taxes. (9/25)

USA Today: Time Is Ripe For Medicare For All

We now have the most wasteful, inefficient and bureaucratic health care system in the world. In fact, we are spending almost twice as much per capita as any other country, while our health care outcomes are often worse. Instead of providing quality care to all in a cost-effective way, our current system is designed to provide hundreds of billions in profits to insurance companies, the pharmaceutical industry and medical equipment suppliers. Moving to a Medicare-for-all, single-payer system would eliminate insurance industry profits and reduce waste, saving up to \$500 billion a year on administrative costs. (Sen. Bernie Sanders, 9/25)

The Hill: 'SandersCare' Doesn't Pass The Laugh Test

Since its inception, Medicare has exhibited poor cost control and unbridled growth. The program is riddled with fraud. A 2015 Government Accountability Office report estimated that over 10 percent of program funds, or 60 billion dollars, are squandered on fraud, waste, abuse and improper payments. ... Despite this undeniable reality, Sen.

Sanders and his co-sponsors propose to miraculously give complete coverage to an additional 270 million people, while absorbing the costs and removing the constraints associated with copayments and deductibles. (Dr. Roger Klein, 9/24)

Chicago Tribune: Five Lessons From Canada On Single-Payer Health Care
The United States is about to debate the merits of Bernie Sanders' proposal for a single-payer health care system. While cost will be an issue, evidence shows that many countries provide access to quality care for all their citizens through a single-payer model while spending far less than the U.S. does now. How can this be? (Colleen M. Flood and Allan Rock, 9/24)

26. Viewpoints: Examining The Link Between Opioids And Medicaid; Putting The Squeeze On ACA Navigators

A selection of opinions on health care from around the country, including a range of thoughts on the Medicaid program and prescription drug costs.

The Wall Street Journal: Does Medicaid Spur Opioid Abuse?
Forty-one state attorneys general are investigating drug manufacturers and distributors for fanning the opioid epidemic; several have already sued. The allegation is that Big Pharma used deceptive marketing to hook millions of Americans on prescription painkillers, which served as gateway drugs to more potent opioids like heroin and fentanyl. (Allysia Finley, 9/24)

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel: Trump Administration Continues Its Attacks On The Affordable Care Act
As another iteration of Trumpcare rears its ugly, untenable head in Washington, like a zombie that just won't go down, the administration has found another, more insidious way of attacking the Affordable Care Act. Just last week, the Department of Health and Human Services announced massive funding cuts to the Navigator program. (Emily Mills, 9/22)

Cincinnati Enquirer: Let's Make Sure We Put Patients Before Profits
Years ago, Congress constructed a well-intentioned program to help certain hospitals and select community and disease-specific health clinics control their prescription drug costs. ... Unfortunately, good ideas sometimes go awry, and that's the case with this program, called 340B. It's having a negative impact on cancer care provided locally in Cincinnati, across Ohio, and across the country. (Randolph Broun, 9/23)

San Jose Mercury News: 60% Of Medicaid Beneficiaries Are Working Americans
The U.S. Congress has put the health of millions at risk with its counterproductive

attempts to gut Medicaid. The changes being proposed will move America's health care system, and our entire economy, in a dangerous and harmful direction, phasing out Medicaid coverage for millions of Americans and threatening the viability of the Medicaid system through underfunded per capita allotments. (Christine Tomcala, 9/24)

Cleveland Plain Dealer: Sinking Medicaid Expansion Is Not The Way To Lead In Ohio
Dozens of Republican incumbents in the Ohio House also may face May 8 primary races next year to retain their seats. Those facts help explain why Taylor and the House GOP caucus are suffering a relapse of Obamacare-phobia -- partly (or largely) out of fear of Republican primary opponents who may seize on Ohio's expansion of Medicaid, made possible under Obamacare, to pummel GOP incumbents. That's self-defeating and wrong. (9/23)

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KHN
KAISER HEALTH NEWS

Morning Briefing

Tuesday, September 26, 2017

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From Kaiser Health News:

KAISER HEALTH NEWS ORIGINAL STORIES

1. Sen. Collins Announces Opposition To GOP Bill To Replace Obamacare

The statement from the Maine senator came after the Congressional Budget Office said the bill would cause millions of people to become uninsured. (Julie Rovner, 9/25)

2. Postcard From Capitol Hill: Health Care Hearing's Action Was In Hallway

Hundreds of protesters were turned away from the Senate's public hearing on the Graham-Cassidy bill to replace the Affordable Care Act, but they made their feelings known outside the door. (Rachel Bluth, 9/25)

3. Nowhere To Go: Young People With Severe Autism Languish In Hospitals

Some teens and young adults are spending weeks or even months in retrofitted emergency rooms — even in mesh-covered tents — until specialized care can be found. 'It's a huge problem,' one doctor says. (Christina Jewett, 9/26)

4. Need An MRI? Anthem Directs Most Outpatients To Independent Centers

The insurer says hospital-based imaging services are too expensive and the independent facilities provide high-quality care. (Michelle Andrews, 9/26)

5. Political Cartoon: 'Evel Knievel?'

Kaiser Health News provides a fresh take on health policy developments with "Political Cartoon: 'Evel Knievel?'" by RJ Matson, Roll Call.

Here's today's health policy haiku:

ONE PLAN FOR LIFE

Take the "pre" out of
Pre-existing conditions,
With single-payer.

- Anonymous

If you have a health policy haiku to share, please [Contact Us](#) and let us know if you want us to include your name. Keep in mind that we give extra points if you link back to a KHN original story.

Summaries Of The News:

HEALTH LAW

6. After Collins Officially Declares Opposition, Passing Health Bill Becomes 'Nearly Impossible'

Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine) joins Sens. John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Rand Paul (R-Ky.) in opposition of Republicans' last-ditch efforts to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, naming the "dramatic, sweeping cuts" to Medicaid as her top reason to vote no. The Republicans only had two votes to spare, so unless leadership can persuade one of three to change his or her vote, the bill would fail if brought to the floor.

The New York Times: Health Bill Appears Dead As Pivotal G.O.P. Senator Declares Opposition

A last-ditch attempt by President Trump and Senate Republicans to dismantle the Affordable Care Act appeared to collapse on Monday as a pivotal senator announced her firm opposition to the latest repeal plan, virtually ensuring that Republicans would not have the votes they need for passage. The announcement by the senator, Susan Collins of Maine, effectively dooms what had been a long-shot effort by Republicans in the Senate to make one more attempt at repealing the health law after failing in dramatic fashion in July. (Kaplan and Pear, 9/25)

The Associated Press: As Senators Defect, GOP Concedes Health Bill's Fate Bleak
"It's going to be a heavy lift," South Dakota Sen. John Thune, the No. 3 GOP Senate leader, said Monday, after Collins joined a small but pivotal cluster of Republicans saying they're against the measure. He called the prospects "bleak." "We don't have the support for it," said Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah. (Fram, 9/26)

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Bloomberg: Senior Senate Republican Calls ACA Repeal Vote 'Nearly Impossible'
"It's nearly impossible. I'm not saying anything is impossible, because we could always maybe work it out in the end, but so far I haven't seen any" indication that suggests that will happen, said Utah Republican Orrin Hatch, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee. (Edney, Litvan and Tracer, 9/25)

The Washington Post: Senate GOP Effort To Unwind The ACA Collapses Monday
While one top Republican senator held out the possibility that the Senate might still vote on the bill, others accepted the reality that the push had sputtered out after Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine) joined two of her colleagues in formal opposition. "Everybody knows that's going to fail," said Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin G. Hatch (R-Utah), who led a raucous, five-hour hearing on the bill Monday afternoon. "You don't have one Democrat vote for it. So it's going to fail." Monday's developments amounted to a massive setback for Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and President Trump, who spent the past week trying to rally support for a last-ditch attempt to fulfill a seven-year Republican promise. (Sullivan, Eilperin and Snell, 9/25)

Los Angeles Times: Latest GOP Obamacare Repeal Effort On Verge Of Collapse As Third Republican Comes Out Against Bill
Monday afternoon, Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin G. Hatch (R-Utah) said GOP leaders would probably not be able to hold a vote this week as planned. Even before Collins' announcement Monday, President Trump sounded increasingly downbeat about the bill's chances. "We're going to lose two or three votes, and that's the end of that," Trump said Monday on Alabama radio's "Rick and Bubba Show," criticizing Republican senators for withholding their support after years of promising to repeal and replace the law. "They pander and they grandstand." (Mascaro and Levey, 9/25)

The Wall Street Journal: Collins Becomes Third Republican To Oppose Graham-Cassidy Bill
The Republicans' latest proposal would take much of the 2010 law's funding and transform it into block grants, which states could use to shape their own health-care systems. Ms. Collins said the earlier and newer versions of the bill both "open the door for states to weaken protections for people with pre-existing conditions, such as asthma, cancer, heart disease, arthritis and diabetes." Ms. Collins said in a statement she was concerned by the rushed process used to consider the bill co-sponsored by her Republican colleagues, Sens. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina and Bill Cassidy of Louisiana. (Armour and Peterson, 9/25)

Bloomberg: Latest GOP Health Bill Dies As Collins Says She Will Vote 'No'
"It makes sweeping cuts and changes in the Medicaid program, which is a vital program for our low-income, vulnerable citizens, including disabled children and low-income seniors," she told reporters Monday evening, adding that President Donald Trump and senior members of his administration had tried to woo her over the weekend. (Tracer, Litvan and Edney, 9/25)

Politico: Collins' Opposition Dooms Latest Obamacare Repeal Effort

Senate Republicans are set to meet Tuesday on whether to try to open debate on health care again on the floor to show the GOP's base that they are still trying to repeal Obamacare. The caucus is internally debating whether to hold a vote certain to fail later this week. "We're going to need to have a meeting of our conference tomorrow at noon to see where we can see where everybody is," said Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn (R-Texas). (Everett, Haberkorn and Dawsey, 9/25)

CQ: Collins Formally Opposes GOP Health Plan, Likely Dooming Effort

Collins said she had spoken with President Donald Trump and told him she likely would not support the legislation. (McIntire, 9/25)

The Associated Press: Paul Still Opposes GOP Health Care Bill, Despite Changes
Kentucky U.S. Sen. Rand Paul says he will not vote for the latest Republican health care bill, calling last-minute changes that would send more money to his state and those of other undecided senators as "suspicious." Republican leaders over the weekend tweaked the bill to give more money to states including Alaska, Arizona, Maine and Kentucky. (Beam, 9/25)

The Hill: Cruz Still A No On ObamaCare Repeal Bill

Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) is still opposed to the latest ObamaCare repeal legislation despite the changes that have been made to the bill, according to a Cruz aide. Cruz's position further endangers the Republican ObamaCare repeal effort, which appears to be on the brink of failure. (Weixel, 9/25)

The New York Times: The Republican Senators Who Have Opposed The Many Bills To Repeal Obamacare

Three Republican senators firmly opposed the latest plan to repeal the Affordable Care Act, leaving Senate leaders short of the votes needed for passage. Thirteen Republican senators from 12 states have rejected at least one of the Senate's five major repeal efforts in recent months. Opposition has come from the party's moderates and hard-liners, but for different reasons. (Andrews, Park and Parlapiano, 9/25)

The Hill: Last-Ditch Repeal Bill Appears Dead

It's not clear whether Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) will still try to hold a floor vote later this week, something some GOP donors and the White House may want to see just to get senators on the record. (Carney, Sullivan and Rouben, 9/25)

Kaiser Health News: Sen. Collins Announces Opposition To GOP Bill To Replace Obamacare

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) has said if someone brings him a health proposal that can gain the 50 votes needed to pass under the budget reconciliation process, he will resume consideration of the bill that he pulled from consideration in July. The Senate's ability to use the fast-track process, however, expires at the end of the fiscal year, which is Saturday. (Rovner, 9/25)

The Hill: Kimmel Thanks Collins For 'Putting People Ahead Of Party' By Opposing Graham-Cassidy

Late-night host Jimmy Kimmel thanked Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine) for “putting people ahead of party” after Collins announced her opposition to the latest GOP ObamaCare repeal bill. Collins announced her opposition to the Graham-Cassidy bill Monday, likely killing Republicans’ latest effort to get rid of ObamaCare. (Carter, 9/25)

The Philadelphia Inquirer/Philly.com: For Rick Santorum, A Haircut, A Health Bill And A Return To The National Fray

More than 10 years and two presidential campaigns after leaving the Senate, Rick Santorum is back in the fray. Despite holding no political office, the polarizing Pennsylvania Republican has been in the middle of the latest Republican push to roll back the Affordable Care Act, an effort that faces a critical deadline this week in what reads like a horror movie for Democrats, starring an idea and a politician that keep coming back. (Tamari, 9/25)

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7. Trump Says McCain's Opposition To Health Bill Was 'Slap In The Face To The Republican Party'

President Donald Trump in his Tweets and on a radio interview is pessimistic about the chances of the bill to replace Obamacare after Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) announced that he could not support the measure.

The Hill: Trump Pessimistic On ObamaCare Repeal: 'That's The End Of That'

President Trump sounded a pessimistic note Monday on the latest GOP effort to repeal ObamaCare, and blamed Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) for costing his party a victory. Trump did not give up all hope on the bill, but suggested it would not get the 50 votes — assuming a tie-breaking vote from Vice President Pence — it needed to clear the Senate because of opposition from McCain, Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine) and other Republicans. (Weixel, 9/25)

The Washington Post: Trump Pins Blame On McCain As Latest GOP Health-Care Bill Sinks

With the latest Republican plan to overhaul the Affordable Care Act collapsing, President Trump focused his ire Monday night on Sen. John McCain, distributing a video that showed the Arizona Republican on board with the mission in the past. "A few of the many clips of John McCain talking about Repealing & Replacing O'Care," Trump said in a tweet that accompanied the video. "My oh my has he changed-complete turn from years of talk!" (Wagner, 9/25)

8. Cassidy Will Keep 'Plugging Along,' But There Will Be No More Tweaks Coming To Woo Senators

Sens. Bill Cassidy (R-La.) and Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) defended their proposed bill at a Senate Finance Committee hearing, where they sparred with Democratic senators.

CQ: Health Repeal Bill Sponsors Defend Plan in Senate Hearing

Sens. Bill Cassidy, R-La., and Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., defended their proposal to overhaul the 2010 health care law during a Finance Committee hearing Monday. The pair, who have led a revival of the GOP push to repeal the health law this month, said they wanted to keep working to address the law because costs are rising. (McIntire, 9/25)

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Politico: Cassidy Rules Out Revisions Even As He Pushes Obamacare Repeal Bill
Sen. Bill Cassidy on Monday pledged not to give up on his Obamacare repeal plan despite lacking GOP support to win its passage by a Saturday deadline. The Louisiana Republican told reporters he'll "keep plugging away" to find the 50 votes needed to pass the bill using a budgetary procedure requiring only majority support. But he added that he's done making tweaks aimed at winning over holdout senators. (Cancryn, 9/25)

Nashville Tennessean: Cassidy Said Tenn. Hospitals, Haslam Support Graham-Cassidy. Do They?

Sen. Bill Cassidy, R-La., said in a Senate Finance Committee that Tennessee hospitals, doctors and Gov. Bill Haslam are behind Graham-Cassidy, the latest Affordable Care Act repeal-and-replace bill. But support for the legislation in the Volunteer State isn't that clear or simple. The Senate is trying to pass Graham-Cassidy by the end of the month. The finance committee heard from the namesake authors as well as a few witnesses around the country. No one from Tennessee spoke. (Fletcher, 9/25)

McClatchy: Genial Lindsey Graham Suddenly Turns Partisan Bulldog On Health Care
Sen. Lindsey Graham has spent years crafting a reputation as a bridge-builder, a "consensus guy," on policy areas that typically polarize the two parties. Now he's leading one of the year's most polarizing debates, and colleagues and constituents alike are seeing a more partisan side of the South Carolina Republican. (Dumain, 9/25)

9. 'Kill The Bill, Don't Kill Us': Protests Erupt At Committee Hearing On GOP Health Measure

Police surrounded the protesters and escorted them out of the room, and more than 100 people were arrested at the hearing and on Capitol grounds.

The Hill: Protests Erupt At GOP ObamaCare Repeal Hearing
Protests erupted at a Republican-led hearing on their ObamaCare repeal bill, leading Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) to briefly recess the hearing, after police dragged several protesters out. "No cuts to Medicaid, save our liberty," attendees chanted. Police surrounded the protesters and escorted them out of the room. Well over 100 people were arrested at the hearing and on Capitol grounds, police said later. (Roubein, 9/25)

The Washington Post: Protests Fill Senate Hallways As Cassidy-Graham Gets Its Hearing
In July, 56-year-old Joe Smith trekked 22 hours from his Harrison, Ark., home to protest the Senate Republicans' attempt to repeal part of the Affordable Care Act. Thinking the fight was over, Smith went home. On Monday morning — after another 22-hour car and bus ride — Smith was back at the Senate, joining hundreds of protesters lined up outside the Senate Finance Committee's hearing on Cassidy-Graham. "We can't afford to lose our health care," said Smith, who suffers from cerebral palsy, gets disability benefits and has insurance through Aetna. "Every time we go up here, I think it makes a difference. I personally think they shouldn't do away with Obamacare, and I think they should fix it, so I'm here." (Weigel, 9/25)

Kaiser Health News: Postcard From Capitol Hill: Health Care Hearing's Action Was In Hallway
"Kill the bill, don't kill us," one woman screamed, inches from a U.S. Capitol Police officer's face Monday afternoon in a marbled hallway of the U.S. Capitol at the start of the one and only public hearing on the GOP's last-ditch effort to replace the Affordable Care Act. The protesters had begun lining up at 5:30 a.m. — some paid others to hold their places — and by 2 p.m., hundreds of people were waiting for a coveted seat for the Senate Finance Committee's hearing in Room 215 of the Dirksen Senate Office

Building. Around lunchtime, Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) strolled through, passing out slices of pizza to some in line. (Bluth, 9/25)

NPR: Graham-Cassidy Health Care Hearing Starts With Eruption Of Protests
Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, suspended the hearing for about 15 minutes while the demonstrators — some in wheelchairs — were dragged from the room. "If the hearing is going to devolve into a sideshow or a forum for simply putting partisan points on the board, there's absolutely no reason for us to be here," Hatch said. (Horsley, 9/25)

10. 'Millions' Of Americans Would Lose Insurance Under GOP Bill, CBO Projects In Partial Analysis

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office didn't have enough time to do a full projection and its score was estimated from an earlier version of the Graham-Cassidy bill. But the agency says "the direction of the effect is clear."

Reuters: Health Plan Would Cut U.S. Deficit, But Leave Millions Without Insurance:
CBO

An earlier version of a healthcare bill Republican leaders are trying to push through the U.S. Senate would save at least \$133 billion over 10 years, Congress' nonpartisan budget agency said on Monday, suggesting it meets requirements to clear the chamber on a simple majority vote. But the U.S. Congressional Budget Office did not assess the most recent version of the Graham-Cassidy bill, leaving it unclear whether it also complies with Senate rules expiring on Sept. 30 that permit approval by a simple majority. (Beech, 9/25)

The Washington Post: CBO Predicts 'Millions' Would Lose Coverage Under The Revised Senate Health Bill

The latest Senate Republican plan to tilt federal health-care law in a conservative direction would cause "millions" of Americans to lose insurance by 2026, while lessening the federal deficit by at least \$133 billion, according to much-anticipated estimates by Congress's nonpartisan budget scorekeepers. The partial analysis by the Congressional Budget Office, issued late Monday afternoon, said that the precise increase in people without health coverage "could vary widely," because the Cassidy-Graham legislation would give each state great latitude to design its own health-care policies. (Goldstein, 9/25)

Politico: Graham-Cassidy Repeal Plan Would Leave 'Millions More' Uninsured
The nonpartisan scorekeeping agency said the legislation's effect on the uninsured rate could vary widely, depending on how states run their health care systems under the

plan, which shifts federal Obamacare payments to a system of block grants to states. The plan would hit savings targets required under the expedited rules GOP leaders are using to try to pass repeal with a simple majority. (Bettelheim, 9/25)

NPR: CBO: Graham-Cassidy Bill Would Reduce Deficit, Increase Number Of Uninsured

CBO says it can't do a complete analysis of the plan in the short window requested by lawmakers. Senate Republicans are looking to vote on the bill this week, before a deadline at the end of September would require they get support from Democrats to be able to pass the legislation. (Kodjak, 9/25)

The Hill: CBO Finds 'Millions' Will Lose Coverage From Repeal Bill

CBO said the reduction in coverage would be felt in three areas: in Medicaid, because the bill repeals ObamaCare's expansion of Medicaid; in private coverage, because the bill repeals subsidies that help people afford it; and because the mandate to have coverage would be repealed. (Sullivan, 9/25)

CQ: CBO: 'Millions' Fewer People Would Be Insured Under Health Bill

The partial score did not include precise estimates of the bill's effects on premiums and coverage levels, as estimates of previous health care bills did, because of the short turnaround time the federal scorekeeper had to evaluate the text. (Clason, 9/25)

Modern Healthcare: Revised GOP Repeal Bill Has Everyone Racing To Figure Out Its Impact

There also was confusion about the bill's amended provisions for letting states relax the ACA's insurance market rules that protect people with pre-existing conditions. Those rules require health plans in the individual market to accept all customers regardless of health status; provide essential benefits; charge everyone the same premium except for a permitted 3-to-1 variance based on age; and set no annual or lifetime caps on benefits. There is general agreement that under the revised Graham-Cassidy bill, states could let insurers discriminate against sicker people. (Meyer, 9/25)

The New York Times: Read The C.B.O. Report On The Graham-Cassidy Health Care Bill

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office on Monday released its findings on the latest Republican health care bill. (9/25)

Other organizations also analyze the effects the measure would have —

Los Angeles Times: 7.5 Million Californians Could Lose Coverage Under Latest Obamacare Repeal Effort, State Health Insurance Exchange Says

Californians who get their health coverage on the individual market could face dire consequences under the current Republican effort to dismantle the Affordable Care Act, warned a new analysis released Monday by Covered California, the state's health insurance exchange. (Mason, 9/25)

Health News Florida: Obamacare Replacement Would Cost Florida \$9.7B Over 6 Years

A proposal to replace the Affordable Care Act would cost Florida \$9.7 billion in federal funding over six years, according to a study from the Kaiser Family Foundation. More than \$7.5 billion of that funding loss would come from a change in the way money is distributed to cover individual health insurance plans under the Graham-Cassidy legislation, named for Republican Senators Lindsay Graham, of South Carolina and Bill Cassidy, of Louisiana. (Ochoa, 9/26)

The Hill: S&P: Graham-Cassidy Bill Would Cost 580K Jobs

The latest ObamaCare repeal bill would hurt the economy and reduce coverage levels, according to a new report released Monday. The S&P Global Ratings report found that the bill, sponsored by GOP Sens. Lindsey Graham (S.C.) and Bill Cassidy (La.), would reduce coverage levels among those making between 133 percent and 400 percent of the federal poverty line, or between \$16,040 and \$48,240 for an individual. (Hellmann, 9/25)

Arizona Republic: Arizona May Face Serious Job Losses Under 'Obamacare' Replacement Bill

Arizona would see Great Recession-type job losses next decade under a Senate Republican health-care proposal to replace the Affordable Care Act, a new report says. The report released Monday predicted Arizona would lose more than 21,000 jobs and nearly \$1.9 billion in economic output in 2020, the first year that the Medicaid expansion's health financing would be converted to block grants under an 'Obamacare' replacement bill introduced by U.S. Sens. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., and Bill Cassidy, R-La. (Alltucker, 9/25)

Boston Globe: Boston Hospital Chiefs, Health Advocates See Peril In Obamacare Repeal Bill

Dozens of Massachusetts doctors, hospital executives, and health care advocates issued a grim warning on Monday that the latest GOP-led effort to replace the Affordable Care Act would decimate insurance coverage and disrupt care for vulnerable patients and families. (Dayal McCluskey, 9/25)

11. For People Covered By Medicaid Expansion, Health Law Debate In Washington Hits Home

Many people who gained insurance through the Affordable Care Act's expansion of Medicaid are fearful about suddenly losing that coverage. In other news, the National Association of Medicaid Directors makes clear that its opposition to a Republican plan to replace the ACA was issued as a consensus view of the board and not a unanimous decision by individual state directors, and The New York Times examines how a change in Medicaid compares to efforts to revamp welfare a generation ago.

The Associated Press: As Health Bill Teeters, Medicaid Recipients Watch Nervously
With the latest Republican health care overhaul teetering near collapse, one group in particular is watching with heightened anxiety. The debate in Congress is personal for many of those who gained coverage through Medicaid in the 31 states that expanded the program under former President Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act. (Cassidy and Mulvihill, 9/26)

Georgia Health News: Group Of State Medicaid Chiefs Clarifies Stand Against GOP Bill
The National Association of Medicaid Directors emphasized Monday that its attention-getting opposition to the Graham-Cassidy health reform legislation was a consensus view of the board, and not a unanimous decision by all Medicaid directors. ... The statement by the Medicaid directors did not go before the full membership for a vote, said Matt Salo, executive director of the National Association of Medical Directors (NAMMD). (Miller, 9/25)

The New York Times: G.O.P. Points To Welfare Overhaul As A Model For Health Care.
The Comparison Has Limits.

As they propose to give each state a wad of federal cash to replace the Affordable Care Act's health insurance, Senate Republicans have a ready comparison to press their case: the overhaul of welfare adopted two decades ago. But the authors of the Senate's latest bill to repeal President Barack Obama's health law face one glaring flaw with the analogy: Few people would applaud a dramatic plunge in health insurance coverage the way they cheered the steep declines of the welfare rolls after the 1996 welfare law went into force. (Pear, 9/25)

12. Confused About What Exactly The Graham-Cassidy Bill Does? Here's A Cheat Sheet

Media outlets break down just what you need to know about the measure and what's coming next.

Stat: Here's Your Graham-Cassidy Cheat Sheet, As GOP Scrambles For Votes
The substance of the new proposal is substantially different from the repeal bills that nearly became law earlier this year. Nonetheless, many of the same questions remain. The bill would deregulate individual insurance markets, slash Medicaid spending, and make it much harder for states to preserve their existing health programs. It could raise costs for Americans with preexisting conditions, limit access to addiction treatment, and reduce spending on public health campaigns, such as childhood vaccinations. (Facher and Mershon, 9/25)

Los Angeles Times: Why Republicans Are Racing To Pass Healthcare By Sept. 30 And What's Next For Obamacare Repeal
Senate Republicans are struggling to pass their latest healthcare overhaul — a bill written by Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) and Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-La.) — by a Sept. 30 deadline. But it's not clear they will have the votes, meaning GOP leaders and President Trump may fail again to repeal the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare. Here's a look at why Republicans are rushing to pass a bill and what's next if they fail. (Mascaro, 9/25)

Politico: GOP Already Eyeing Next Chance To Revive Obamacare Repeal
The supposedly hard deadline at the end of the month to repeal Obamacare might not be so hard after all. With their latest attempt to dismantle the health law on track to fail this week, GOP senators are already raising the prospect of going after it again with the same powerful tools that currently let them pass legislation with just 50 votes. (Kim, Haberkorn and Everett, 9/25)

13. A Recipe For Chaos: Even If Plan Passed, States Warn They Wouldn't Be Able To Implement It

"Honestly, I am really struggling to figure out how we would respond," said Teresa Miller, Pennsylvania's acting secretary of human services, saying it's "highly unlikely" Pennsylvania would be able to build a functioning insurance marketplace by the bill's 2020 deadline. In other news, a look at what it would mean for consumers if the measure passed, The Washington Post fact checks remarks by Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-La.) on premiums, and critics focus on pre-existing conditions.

Politico: States Warn Latest Obamacare Repeal Plan 'Impossible' To Set Up
State officials are warning they face a daunting, near-impossible task of rebuilding their

health care systems from the ground up in just two years under the GOP's latest Obamacare repeal plan. It's a recipe for chaos, say those officials, who fear the unforgiving timeline and minimal federal assistance could result in insurance market collapses that force millions of residents to lose coverage. (Cancryn and Rayasam, 9/25)

The Associated Press: What The Latest Health Overhaul Push Means For Consumers
Only one thing is certain for insurance shoppers if the latest attempt to replace former President Barack Obama's health care law succeeds: Uncertainty. Will you be able to get coverage? How much will it cost? Will it cover my conditions? It depends. (Murphy, 9/25)

The Washington Post Fact Checker: Meet The Man Flagged By Cassidy As Paying \$40,000 In Health-Care Premiums

In selling his plan to repeal the Affordable Care Act, co-sponsored with Sen. Lindsey O. Graham (R-S.C.), Sen. Bill Cassidy repeatedly has mentioned the case of a Louisiana resident who faces \$40,000 in insurance premiums. There are actually two such cases, one of which Cassidy touted on Facebook in 2016, though the details are a bit fuzzy. He displayed an insurance sheet that shows a couple being quoted \$3,300 a month in premiums for a plan with a \$6,200 deductible and \$13,000 cap on total expenses. Cassidy has not identified this person. (Kessler, 9/26)

The Hill: Critics Say Pre-Existing Conditions Protections Weakened In Updated GOP Bill

Critics of the updated ObamaCare repeal measure from Sens. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) and Bill Cassidy (R-La.) say it goes further than their earlier bill in gutting protections for people with pre-existing conditions. The two lawmakers say they changed their legislation in a bid to win over holdout senators by giving the states more money and more freedom. (Weixel, 9/25)

14. With GOP Bill Nearly Dead Senators' CNN Debate Became More Theory Than Practice

When the debate was set with Sens. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) on one side and Sens. Bill Cassidy (R-La.) and Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) on the other, the Graham-Cassidy bill was gaining momentum. But by Monday night it looked all but dead, so the event lost some of its urgency.

The Washington Post: With Lower Stakes, Sanders And Klobuchar Debate GOP Repeal Bill's Sponsors On CNN

Halfway through CNN's prime-time debate on the Affordable Care Act, Sen. Bernie

Sanders (I-Vt.) went in for the kill. Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) had taken his umpteenth swing at “bureaucrats,” telling viewers that “Bernie’s solution is more government, not less,” warning that the Vermont senator would pour millions of people into Medicare when the system could not handle them. “It is easy to beat up on big, bad federal government,” said Sanders. “Guys, do you know what the most popular health insurance program in America is? It’s not the private insurance industry. It is...” Graham decided not to dodge. “Medicare,” he said. “Medicare, yeah!” said Sanders. “Which is falling apart,” said Graham. (Weigel, 9/26)

The Hill: Sanders: America Must Guarantee Healthcare 'As A Right For All People'
In his opening remarks during tonight's CNN healthcare debate, Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) blasted Senate Republicans' latest attempt to repeal and replace ObamaCare by highlighting major opposition to the bill. "Every major health association in this country, whether it is the American Medical Association, the American Hospital Association, the American Cancer Society, the Alzheimer's Society, every single major medical organization in this county think this proposal is a disaster," Sanders said. (9/25)

The Hill: Sanders, Klobuchar Debate Graham, Cassidy On ObamaCare, Repeal And Single-Payer
Sanders and Klobuchar ran through a series of familiar arguments against the GOP bill, including that it would risk protections for those with preexisting conditions. Sanders also defended his single-payer proposal, even as Graham and Cassidy warned of creeping socialism. (9/25)

The Star Tribune: Sen. Klobuchar Steers Health Care Debate To Middle Ground
U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar had 90 minutes on the national stage Monday to make her best case for protecting the Affordable Care Act. ... The 90-minute format gave senators a chance to discuss a fraught policy issue and to hear from Americans battling rising premiums and medical bills, or terrified that a change in the law could deprive a sick child of future coverage. (Brooks, 9/26)

Politico: Graham And Cassidy Vow In Debate To Continue Obamacare Repeal Effort
With their Obamacare repeal bill on the brink of failure, Sens. Lindsey Graham and Bill Cassidy squared off with Sens. Bernie Sanders and Amy Klobuchar in a nationally televised debate Monday night and vowed to keep up their effort. “We’re going to press on,” Graham said of his and Cassidy’s repeal bill, which appears all but dead amid firm opposition from three Republican senators. “It’s OK to vote. It’s OK to fall short.” (Schor, 9/25)

PUBLIC HEALTH AND EDUCATION

15. FDA, Interpol Crack Down On Hundreds Of Websites Illegally Selling Unapproved Drugs

The operation targeted more than 500 websites illegally selling unapproved versions of prescription medications, the Food and Drug Administration said. Also, a prosecutor in New York teams up with academics to find opioid treatment gaps, and a young man whose overdose left him with irreversible brain damage and shocked the Berkeley campus seven years ago has died.

The Washington Post: FDA Targets Hundreds Of 'Rogue' Websites Illegally Selling Opioids And Other Prescription Drugs

The Food and Drug Administration targeted more than 500 websites it said were illegally selling unapproved versions of prescription medications, including opioids, antibiotics and injectable epinephrine products, the agency said Monday. The action was part of a global operation called Pangea X, led by the international police organization Interpol. That group said the international enforcement effort, designed each year to identify the makers and distributors of illegal, counterfeit and substandard medical products on the Internet, occurred Sept. 12 to 19. (McGinley, 9/25)

The New York Times: Report Finds Gaps In Access To Opioid Addiction Help On Staten Island

New York City was in the throes of an alarming increase in opioid-related overdoses last summer when the city's special narcotics prosecutor, Bridget G. Brennan, decided to follow up on a tip — not about a drug crime but about a potential academic collaboration. The approach revealed a severe treatment gap for addicts on Staten Island. (DelReal, 9/25)

San Francisco Chronicle: Ex-UC Berkeley Student Dies 7 Years After Catastrophic Drug Overdose

A UC Berkeley junior who suffered irreversible brain damage in 2010 when housemates at his university residence waited two hours to call 911 after he'd overdosed, has died. His mother, Madelyn Bennett, confirmed that John Gibson, 28, died Sunday in a San Diego hospice seven years after his tragedy — and Bennett's lawsuit — set in motion changes to UC Berkeley's emergency reporting policies and the transformation of a beloved, historic student residence called Cloyne Court. (Asimov, 9/25)

16. Nation's Organ Donation Network Wants To Make Liver Transplants 'A Little Bit More Equal'

Right now, the chance of receiving a liver greatly depends on where a patient lives, but the United Network for Organ Sharing is looking to change that. In other public health news: sepsis, the benefits of social programs aimed at low-income children, autism, doulas and more.

NPR: Liver Transplant Allocation Proposal Sparks Debate

Himanshu Patel ran a convenience store in Georgia until about a year ago, when his liver failure got so bad he had to quit. "I just couldn't stand up on my feet at all," says Patel, 39, of Waycross, Ga. "I just had to stop working." Now, he's waiting anxiously to find out if his doctors have found a liver for him so he can undergo a transplant. (Stein, 9/26)

Modern Healthcare: Sepsis Mortality Rate On The Rise

While the number of cases of sepsis—one of the most deadly and costly conditions at hospitals—remained flat over a five-year period, mortality from the condition was worse than previously estimated, a new JAMA study has found. Sepsis was present in 6% of hospitalizations from 2009 to 2014. At the same time, sepsis accounted for roughly 15% of in-hospital deaths and 6.2% of discharges to hospice. Prior estimates of sepsis-related deaths were around 10%. (Castellucci, 9/25)

The Wall Street Journal: The Benefits Of Early Childhood Education And Health Programs May Last Longer Than A Lifetime

New research suggests programs aimed at helping low-income U.S. children, such as Head Start early childhood education and Medicaid health coverage, may have benefits not only for participating children but for their children as well. A recent working paper found the 1980s expansion of Medicaid programs to cover more low-income pregnant women led, years later, to their children giving birth to healthier babies. Another working paper found childhood access to Head Start led to better long-term outcomes in the next generation, including higher high-school graduation rates and reduced criminal behavior. (Leubsdorf, 9/25)

Kaiser Health News: Nowhere To Go: Young People With Severe Autism Languish In Hospitals

Teenagers and young adults with severe autism are spending weeks or even months in emergency rooms and acute-care hospitals, sometimes sedated, restrained or confined to mesh-tented beds, a Kaiser Health News investigation shows. These young people — who may shout for hours, bang their heads on walls or lash out violently at home — are taken to the hospital after community social services and programs fall short and families call 911 for help, according to more than two dozen interviews with parents, advocates and physicians in states from Maine to California. (Jewett, 9/26)

The Washington Post: Doula Help With Pregnant Women Aims To Reduce Black Infant Mortality

This city has opened a new front in its effort to give black newborns the same chances of surviving infancy as white ones: training doulas to assist expectant mothers during pregnancy, delivery and afterward. The initiative is the latest salvo in the Baltimore City Health Department's seven-year-old effort to combat high mortality rates among black newborns. (Ollove, 9/25)

The Washington Post: FDA Halts Monkey Research Denounced By Jane Goodall As 'Shameful'

The Food and Drug Administration has suspended experiments on the effects of nicotine in squirrel monkeys, research aimed at better understanding one of the most pernicious of addictions. Two weeks ago, British primatologist Jane Goodall wrote to FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb, urging an end to what she called "cruel and unnecessary" and "shameful" research. (McGinley, 9/25)

STATE WATCH

17. State Highlights: Fla. Lawmaker Raised Red Flag About Nursing Homes' Struggles After Irma; Judge Strikes Down Provisions In Ind. Abortion Law

Media outlets report on news from Florida, Indiana, Connecticut, California, Georgia and Kansas.

The Hill: Fla. Lawmaker Warned Officials Before Retirement Home Tragedy

A day before eight residents from the same Florida nursing home died, Rep. Frederica Wilson joined other state and federal officials on a Hurricane Irma recovery conference call and warned the situation could quickly turn deadly if power is not restored to local senior facilities. The Florida Democrat's phone had been ringing nonstop since Hurricane Irma knocked out power to much of South Florida on Sept. 10. Wilson has 100 long-term care facilities in her Miami-area district, and many were begging her to help get the power — and the air conditioning — back on. (Wong, 9/26)

The Associated Press: Federal Judge Permanently Blocks Indiana Abortion Limits

A federal judge permanently struck down provisions of an Indiana law passed last year that would have banned abortions sought due to fetal genetic abnormalities and required that aborted fetuses be buried or cremated. U.S. District Judge Tanya Walton Pratt's decision, issued Friday, found that those two provisions and a third one are unconstitutional. She granted an order permanently blocking all three from being

enforced and granted summary judgment in favor of Planned Parenthood of Indiana and Kentucky, which had sued the state in April 2016 after then-Gov. Mike Pence signed the provisions into law. (9/25)

The CT Mirror: Key Budget Revenue-Raiser Faces Looming Expiration Date
Raising taxes on hospitals to leverage more federal dollars, a key component of all plans to solve Connecticut's budget crisis, could be in jeopardy if legislators don't reach agreement by week's end. Gov. Dannel P. Malloy and the hospital industry — which agreed to endorse the tax hike under very specific conditions — urged state officials Monday to act quickly. (Phaneuf, 9/25)

Los Angeles Times: Blaze At Homeless Encampment In San Diego County May Have Exposed Firefighters To Hepatitis A
A team of firefighters may have been exposed to hepatitis A while battling a vegetation fire early Sunday at a homeless encampment in Spring Valley, officials said. A "large amount" of urine and feces had accumulated at the encampment, prompting hazardous materials crews to require firefighters to decontaminate with soap and water before leaving the scene, according to the San Miguel Fire Protection District. (Tchekmedyan, 9/25)

The Associated Press: Advocates Want More Police Training For Mental-Health Issues
Supervisors for the Georgia Tech police officer who fatally shot a student thought the officer showed promise, but there is no evidence that he had received the kind of training that advocates say is crucial to effectively interact with people who have mental-health issues. Officer Tyler Beck fatally shot Scout Schultz on Sept. 16, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation has said. Beck and other officers responded after Schultz called 911 to report an armed suspicious person, investigators said. Police have said Schultz had a knife and refused to drop it after repeated commands. (9/25)

Los Angeles Times: Death Toll From West Nile Climbs To 7 In L.A. County, Officials Say
Los Angeles County health officials warned residents Monday to protect themselves against the mosquitoes that transmit West Nile virus, as the number of people killed by the disease in L.A. County this year reached seven. The department launched a campaign Monday called "It's Not Just A Bite" to try to raise awareness about mosquito-borne diseases, including West Nile. (Karlama, 9/25)

Kansas City Star: Life Expectancy Going Down In Several Kansas City ZIP Codes
Kansas City Health Department data shows that in each of the last two years there were four ZIP codes in the city in which life expectancy was going down. Department officials aren't yet sure why, but they think it may be related to socioeconomic changes

within those ZIP codes because those factors tend to influence health outcomes even more than medical care. (Marso, 9/25)

Kansas City Star: Double-Murderer Sues For Prison Smoking Ban - And Wins
At the prison in Cameron, the asthmatic Washington kept being paired with heavy smokers, despite doctor's orders that his quarters be smoke-free. Now, after a decade-long legal battle, Washington is declaring victory with a settlement that not only protects his health but orders the Missouri prison system to go smoke-free on or before April 1. (Hendricks, 9/25)

The Associated Press: Coffee Sold In California Could Carry Cancer Warning Labels
A future cup of coffee in California could give you jitters before you even take a sip. A nonprofit group wants coffee manufacturers, distributors and retailers to post ominous warnings about a cancer-causing chemical stewing in every brew and has been presenting evidence in a Los Angeles courtroom to make its case. (9/25)

San Francisco Chronicle: Coffee Sold In California May Come With Warning Labels In Future

The long-running lawsuit that resumed Monday claims Starbucks and about 90 other companies, including grocery stores and retail shops, failed to follow a state law requiring warning signs about hazardous chemicals found everywhere from household products to workplaces to the environment. At the center of the dispute is acrylamide, a carcinogen found in cooked foods such as French fries that is also a natural byproduct of the coffee roasting process. (Melley, 9/25)

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

18. Politics And Process: Did Graham-Cassidy Collapse Because It Left Millions Uninsured? Was Crafted Behind Closed Doors? Or Because It Shifted Money, Power Away From 'The Swamp'?

Editorial writers offer harsh words and examinations of what caused the GOP's most recent repeal-and-replace effort to come undone.

The Washington Post: Why Republicans' Latest Obamacare Repeal Attempt Was Doomed From The Start

Republicans' health-care bill collapsed in the Senate Monday night in familiar fashion. Republicans tried to rush through an unpopular bill, largely crafted and edited behind closed doors, that would leave millions more uninsured than current law and that never had nor won the support of moderates and conservatives in their party. In the bill's final

days, changes were haphazardly slapped on that seem devised to attract votes rather than inspire confidence the legislation will improve health-care policy. (Amber Phillips, 9/25)

The New York Times: Trumpcare Is Dead. Long Live The Trumpcare Opposition. It's over. And it's not over. The effort to take away health insurance from millions of people = 2 known by the name it deserves, Trumpcare — seems to have failed again. The latest version, the Graham-Cassidy bill, looks doomed, with three Republican senators joining all 48 Democrats and independents in opposition. Three plus 48 equals 51, and 51 no votes equal defeat. (David Leonhardt, 9/25)

The Washington Post: Cassidy Is 'Sorry' About The Cassidy-Graham Process. He Should Be.

Maybe the Senate janitor's closet was already booked? For Monday's hearing on the Cassidy-Graham bill to repeal Obamacare — the one and only hearing scheduled on the measure — Republicans trying to hurry it through Congress gave every sign that they did not want to be noticed. Senate hearing rooms that could have fit hundreds were left idle Monday afternoon, and instead Republicans chose one that could fit just 30 members of the public, leaving hundreds waiting in the hall outside. Many reporters, too, were turned away — the better to avoid scrutiny. (Dana Milbank, 9/25)

The Wall Street Journal: Graham-Cassidy Vs. The Swamp

Whatever else it does, the health reform crafted by Republican Sens. Bill Cassidy and Lindsey Graham shifts money and power out of Washington. And the swamp is not pleased. But as angry as Beltway inhabitants are to see this idea get a fair hearing, their reaction suggests that the substance of the bill isn't all that bad. How else to explain their argument against it? (James Freeman, 9/25)

The Washington Post: = 2Reasonable' Republicans Are Betraying Us, Too
President Trump clearly has no clue what's happening on health care, taxes or really any other major policy front. He has also made abundantly clear that he has no interest in getting up to speed. Unfortunately, Trump's unseriousness has become so grotesque, so all-consuming, that it has distracted us from dozens of other dilettantes and demagogues in Washington — far too many of them other members of Trump's own political party. (Catherine Rampell, 9/25)

The Des Moines Register: Will Grassley Keep His Promise On Health Care?

Here we go again. The GOP has cobbled together another half-baked plan to repeal the Affordable Care Act. Sen. Chuck Grassley's rationale on the legislation is beneath the long-serving member of Congress. "You know, I could maybe give you 10 reasons why this bill shouldn't be considered," Grassley said during a conference call with

reporters last week. "But Republicans campaigned on this so often that you have a responsibility to carry out what you said in the campaign. That's pretty much as much of a reason as the substance of the bill." (9/25)

Detroit Free Press: GOP, Dems Should Compromise On Health Care Reform
Two decades ago, with Democrats and Republicans sharing equal numbers of seats in the Michigan House of Representatives, House leaders constructed a unique power-sharing arrangement. Committees were co-chaired by one Democrat and one Republican. Agreements were constructed where neither party would try to ram through its agenda if special circumstances, like a seat unexpectedly becoming vacant, served to tilt the delicate balance of power. (Daniel J. Loepp, 9/25)

Slate: The Most Cynical Republican On Obamacare
Few American politicians are as skilled at marketing the unmarketable as Vice President Mike Pence. As Senate Republicans these past weeks made a final push to repeal the Affordable Care Act, Pence entered full salesman mode, pitching the Graham-Cassidy bill in TV appearances as the GOP's "last, best chance" at health care reform. The bill, Pence asserted, "will allow states to innovate and to create better quality health care" rather than comply with "a one-size-fits-all program in Washington, D.C." No part of that claim is true, and Pence surely knows it. (Mark Joseph Stern, 9/26)

19. Policy Perspectives: GOP Plan Would Create 'An Unworkable Quagmire'; Graham-Cassidy A 'Threat To Children'

Opinion pages across the country view the impact of the Republican health bill -- which currently appears to have failed under its own weight -- in harsh terms.

USA Today: Scrap Graham-Cassidy Health Bill Or Plunge America And GOP Into Misery

Take it from someone who has overseen the implementation of a massive new health care law: For all the promises Republicans have made about repealing and replacing the Affordable Care Act, a bill like the one they aim to pass this week would not just hurt people, it would enmesh the GOP in an unworkable quagmire. (Andy Slavitt, 9/25)

Los Angeles Times: Republicans Should Gladly Pay For My Preexisting Condition
It's a question I encounter frequently when I discuss healthcare with conservatives, particularly after I note that I have a chronic and costly preexisting condition, Type 1 diabetes. "Why should I pay for your healthcare?" they ask. (David Lazarus, 9/26)

Los Angeles Times: The GOP's Revised Obamacare Repeal Bill Is Even Worse For People With Pre-Existing Conditions

What may be of more interest to Americans in all states, however, is that in their revised draft, the sponsors also weakened protections for people with pre-existing conditions even more than did their original version. (Michael Hiltzik, 9/25)

Stat: The Graham-Cassidy Bill Is A Threat To Children

As a physician whose job it is to provide lifelong care for babies like [Jimmy] Kimmel's son, I agree with him ~~3~~ 0 it is time for all of us to politicize our children's health problem. But, it is also time to listen to each other. The American Academy of Pediatrics warns that the bill "may be disguised under a different name, but it contains the same dangerous policies as the legislation that failed to advance out of the Senate earlier this summer. In fact, Graham-Cassidy goes even further in its attacks on Medicaid." (Angira Patel, 9/25)

Los Angeles Times: I Have A 1-Year-Old Son. If Cassidy-Graham Had Been In Place, He Probably Wouldn't Have Been Born

My son recently had his first birthday. He hates wearing clothes but loves eating cheese ("cheeee"). I don't know that he'd be here if it weren't for the Affordable Care Act. Republicans are once again jockeying to repeal and replace that law — this time through a bill from Republican Sens. Lindsey Graham and Bill Cassidy. The GOP has pitched Graham-Cassidy as a friendly and fair instance of federalism — a chance to turn Obamacare's money and regulatory power over to the states. (Craig Fehrman, 9/26)

Cleveland Plain Dealer: Graham-Cassidy Jeopardizes Ohio's Health Care System
Graham-Cassidy is, ostensibly, intended to provide states with more flexibility to manage their health care needs. In truth, the bill is a poorly developed, partisan attempt to deprive health care dollars from those who need it most. (Coleman Drake, 9/25)

Seattle Times: Health-Care Reform That Cuts Medicaid Fails Children

Medicaid has earned broad bipartisan support since its inception in 1965 as a cost-effective safety net to keep children and families healthy. The program is critical to ensuring that children from low-income families and children with special health-care needs receive timely, quality health care. The Graham-Cassidy proposal would jeopardize health care for millions of children and families. (Rupin Thakkar and Elizabeth Meade, 9/25)

Lexington Herald Leader: If Health-Care Money Is Sent To States, Could We Trust Bevin With It?

Here is a question for Gov. Matt Bevin and his millionaire Republicans who now control the Kentucky legislature: If the new Republican health-care plan is approved, sending billions of federal dollars back to Kentucky, would he spend it on health care for the poor, the disabled, the aged? Or, would he find other uses, such as saving Kentucky's under-funded pension plans, that do more to help higher-ups than the average working Kentuckian? (Frank Ashley, 9/25)

20. Viewpoints: Mohammad Ali's Experiences Offer Insights About Athletes And Brain Disease; What About That National Opioid Emergency?

A selection of opinions on health care from around the country.

The Washington Post: Muhammad Ali Shows Why Brain Disease Won't Keep Football Players Off The Field

Because he was so well known and beloved = 2 arguably the most famous man in the world — Ali was often asked whether he was concerned about brain damage. Early in his career, when he was young and fast, he said he wasn't worried. But as he aged and slowed, he took more punishment, and it was easy to see the effects. ... But Ali kept boxing, unable to resist the money and public adoration. (Jonathan Eig, 9/25)

St. Louis Post-Dispatch: Whatever Happened To The National Emergency On Opioid Abuse?

There are 29 active national emergencies in place today in the United States. The latest is the one that President Donald Trump declared on Aug. 10: "The opioid crisis is an emergency, and I am saying, officially, right now, it is an emergency. It's a national emergency. We're going to spend a lot of time, a lot of effort and a lot of money on the opioid crisis. It is a serious problem the likes of which we have never had." ...

Unfortunately, it's been six weeks since the emergency was declared, and the only step the administration has taken is to form a public-private partnership on the issue with some of the drug companies that have profited mightily from the addiction crisis. (9/24)

Los Angeles Times: Paging Dr. Price, Come To The White House Courtesy Phone. The President Would Like To Berate You Now

If it hadn't done so already, the clock started ticking Monday on Dr. Tom Price's tenure as head of the Department of Health and Human Services. The signs are all there. On Sunday, after defending Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin against an ABC News report that he'd used a costly military jet to fly from New York to Washington, President Trump declined to offer similar support for his HHS secretary, who has run up huge bills chartering private jets for his business travel this year. "As far as Secretary Price is

concerned, that's different," Trump told reporters. "We're looking into it." (Jon Healey, 9/26)

Reuters: How Congress Is Hacking Away At Disability Rights

On September 7, on a straight party-line vote, the Republican-controlled House Judiciary Committee moved forward a bill that would gut key protections for people with disabilities. Although versions of this legislation had been introduced in prior years, the bill did not go anywhere while President Barack Obama stood ready to veto it. But now that President Donald Trump, whose actions have demonstrated hostility to civil rights, occupies the White House, the proposal presents a real risk of passage. If Republicans in Congress do eviscerate the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), it will be the culmination of their recent abandonment of the bipartisan consensus in favor of inclusion and equality for disabled persons. (Samuel R. Bagenstos, 9/25)

Stat: The CDC Finally Reverses Course On Treatment For Chronic Fatigue Syndrome
For years, people with chronic fatigue syndrome have wrangled with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention over information on the agency's website about this debilitating illness. The website highlighted two treatments that became the de facto standards of care: a gradual increase in exercise and a form of psychotherapy known as cognitive behavioral therapy. The problem was that the evidence doesn't support these treatments. This summer, after years of resisting pleas from patients, advocates, and clinicians, the CDC quietly dropped the treatment recommendations from its website. Its decision represents a major victory for the patient community — and for science. (Julie Rehmeyer and David Tuller, 9/25)

Los Angeles Times: Facing Criticism, UC Irvine Scrubs 'Homeopathy' From Its Roster Of Offered Treatments

As of late last week, visitors to the website of UC Irvine Health, that institution's clinical arm, could learn that among its services to patients was "homeopathy." That was a problem, because homeopathy is a discredited and thoroughly debunked "alternative medicine." Even Howard Federoff, UCI's vice chancellor for health affairs, agreed that the scientific basis for homeopathy was "lacking." The issue is important because the donors of a \$200-million gift to UCI's medical schools, the billionaire couple Susan and Henry Samueli, are sworn believers in homeopathy and supporters of a raft of other "integrative" health treatments. As I reported, some medical authorities have raised questions about whether the Samuelis' beliefs and their rare generosity will undermine UCI's explicit commitment to science-based medicine. (Michael Hiltzik, 9/25)

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KAISER HEALTH NEWS

Thursday, September 28, 2017

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KAISER HEALTH NEWS ORIGINAL STORIES

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1. Why Glaring Quality Gaps Among Nursing Homes Are Likely To Grow If Medicaid Is Cut

Medicaid covers about two-thirds of nursing home residents, but it pays less than other types of insurance. (Jordan Rau, 9/28)

2. For Some Refugees, Women's Health Care Is A Culture Shock

= A

Refugee women from conservative Muslim countries can be shocked by some U.S. medical conventions — like trusting a male doctor to care for them. (Sarah Varney, 9/28)

3. Political Cartoon: 'A Whole New Ball Game?'

Kaiser Health News provides a fresh take on health policy developments with "Political Cartoon: 'A Whole New Ball Game?'" by Steve Sack, The Minneapolis Star Tribune.

Here's today's health policy haiku:

A NEW DIRECTION?

Repeal and replace.
Blind? Or just can't see the light?
Medicare for all!

- John Schneider

If you have a health policy haiku to share, please Contact Us and let us know if you want us to include your name. Keep in mind that we give extra points if you link back to a KHN original story.

Summaries Of The News:

ADMINISTRATION NEWS

4. House Launches Investigation Into HHS Secretary's Private Jet Use; Trump Says He's 'Not Happy' With Price

When asked if Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price would be fired over his use of a private jet that has cost taxpayers more than \$400,000 since May, President Donald Trump said, "We'll see." Meanwhile, the House Oversight Committee is requesting information on Price's travel.

Politico Pro: House Oversight Committee Launches Investigation Into Agency Travel Following Price Reports

Under Federal Travel Regulations, officials are advised to take the "most expeditious" means of transportation and "by no means should include personal use," Chairman Trey Gowdy and ranking member Elijah Cummings write in a sample letter addressed to Price, who served more than a decade in the House before joining Trump's administration. Similar letters were sent to 23 other agencies and the White House. (Diamond, 9/27)

Politico: Trump Fuming Over Price's Charter Flights

Politico has revealed that Price has flown 26 times on private aircraft since last May at a cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars, a break with the practice of his predecessors, who generally took commercial flights. Some Trump advisers are urging Trump to get rid of Price, according to three people familiar with the conversations. "His conduct is pretty much indefensible," one senior administration official said. "I don't know how you defend it." (Dawsey, Restuccia and Nelson, 9/27)

The Associated Press: Top Health Official's Travel Angers Trump

President Donald Trump says he's "not happy" with his top health official, putting Tom Price's job in jeopardy after his costly charter flights triggered a congressional

investigation of administration travel. Asked whether he's planning on firing Price, Trump responded Wednesday: "We'll see." (Alonso-Zaldivar and Lucey, 9/28)

The Washington Post: Trump: 'Not Happy' About HHS Secretary Tom Price's Taxpayer-Funded Travel On Private Jets

President Trump on Wednesday said he is "not happy" about revelations that Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price took numerous flights on government-funded private jets for work and personal trips. But the former congressman from Georgia is likely to keep his job, according to two people familiar with Trump's thinking. Responding to questions from reporters at the White House, Trump said he is "looking into" the situation and that "personally, I'm not happy about it, and I let him know it." Trump spoke by phone with Price in recent days, said the sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the personnel issue. (Nakamura and Gearan, 9/27)

The New York Times: Tom Price's Spending Habits Catch Trump's Attention: 'I'm Not Happy About It'

According to a senior administration official familiar with Mr. Trump's thinking, the president's willingness to ferret out financial wrongdoing is not good news for Mr. Price, a physician and a former Georgia congressman who has been a vocal proponent of cost-cutting within his own agency. Mr. Trump, who is known to dislike appearances of financial waste, is said to be increasingly frustrated with a series of reports published by Politico about Mr. Price's spending habits. (Rogers, 9/27)

Los Angeles Times: Will Health Secretary Tom Price Be Fired Over Use Of Charter Planes? 'We'll See,' Trump Says

The inspector general of the Health and Human Services Department is probing the flights, and the House Oversight Committee has asked the White House and various agencies to turn over information about any private flights. (Decker, 9/27)

NPR: Trump, 'Not Happy,' Joins Critics Of His Own Highflying Cabinet Officials On Capitol Hill, House Oversight Committee Chairman Trey Gowdy, R-S.C., and ranking Democrat Elijah Cummings, D-Md., sent letters instructing administration officials to supply details and documents from all trips on government-owned or chartered aircraft by nonelected political appointees. Letters went to the heads of 24 executive departments and independent agencies and to White House chief of staff John Kelly. (Overby, 9/27)

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The Hill: Democrats Call For Price's Resignation

Democratic lawmakers began calling for Health and Human Services Secretary Tom

Price to resign on Wednesday following a series of reports about his use of private jets at taxpayers' expense. Five House Democrats joined together to demand Price's resignation, hours after President Trump said he's "not happy" with his health secretary's pattern of costing taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars to ride on private planes. (Marcos, 9/27)

Stat: On Heels Of Tom Price Private Jet Revelations, House Committee Launches Inquiry

As a Republican effort to repeal the Affordable Care Act collapsed for the second time in three months this week, the man tapped to lead the charge found himself at the center of another controversy. Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price, according to a series of reports from Politico, has racked up a tab of more than \$400,000 in private jet travel, despite his predecessors' longstanding practice of traveling on commercial airlines. (Facher, 9/27)

Bloomberg: Trouble Mounts For Trump's Health Secretary After Private-Jet Trips
On Wednesday, the the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform released a letter asking Price for details on his use of "government-owned aircraft for personal travel or private non-commercial aircraft for official travel." The letter, signed by the committee's top Republican and Democrat, gives Price two weeks to provide the records. It also drags the former congressman into an inquiry by fellow Republicans, a relative rarity in Washington politics. HHS's Office of Inspector General is also investigating the trips. (Edney, 9/27)

The Hill: Oversight Panel To Investigate Cabinet Officials Using Private Planes
The House Oversight Committee will investigate the use of private jet travel by Cabinet officials. The committee on Wednesday sent letters to the White House and 24 federal agencies requesting information related to senior officials' use of government-owned aircraft or private non-commercial aircraft for official and personal travel. (Weixel, 9/27)

The Hill: Poll: Majority View Price's Use Of Private Jet As 'Inappropriate'
A majority of voters thinks it's inappropriate for Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price to use private jets for official business, a new poll released Wednesday shows. Price has used a charter flight at least 26 times since May, totaling about \$400,000, according to a series of Politico reports. (Hellmann, 9/27)

MARKETPLACE

5. Trump Promises Order To Allow Insurers To Sell Across State Lines - But That Option Already Exists

Several states have tried it, and it's been a bust.

The Washington Post: Trump Plans Executive Action To Let Insurers Sell Health Plans Across State Lines

President Trump said Wednesday that he could take executive action next week to allow insurers to sell health plans across state lines and make it easier for individual consumers to buy coverage as a group, a policy approach long championed by conservatives. Trump's comments, which came on the same day that insurers in about three dozen states had to finalize their federal contracts to offer 2018 coverage under the Affordable Care Act, did little to allay their concerns or those of state officials. (Eilperin and Winfield Cunningham, 9/27)

CNN Money: Trump Says He May Sign Executive Order On Health Care Next Week
A day after Congress' last-ditch attempt to repeal Obamacare failed, Trump said he may soon sign an executive order on health care that would affect millions of people. "I'll probably be signing a very major executive order where people can go out, cross state lines, do lots of things and buy their own health care, and that will be probably signed next week," he told reporters Wednesday. "It's being finished now. It's going to cover a lot of territory and a lot of people. Millions of people." (Luhby, 9/27)

The Hill: Trump Plans Order Allowing Insurance Sold Across State Lines
Trump said the order is "being finished now. It's going to cover a lot of territory and a lot of people — millions of people." Selling insurance across state lines is an idea Republicans have long backed. They say competition will help drive down prices. Experts said it's not clear what an executive order on selling insurance plans across state lines would do. (Weixel, 9/27)

The Wall Street Journal: Trump Says He'll Work With Democrats On Health Care
The push to ease interstate health-insurance sales has long been a goal of Republicans. Insurers that operate nationally already can sell plans to consumers in any state as long as they are licensed in that state and follow its rules. Republicans have sought to give insurers leeway to sell policies to consumers in a state where they aren't licensed; such policies would only need to meet the insurer's home-state regulations. Groups such as the National Association of Insurance Commissioners have argued that insurers under such a system might flock to states with the most-limited requirements for the industry. That could result in some plans carrying bare-bones coverage, even if offering cheaper premiums. In recent years, a handful of states

passed legislation setting up special agreements that allow insurers in one state to sell coverage to individuals in another state, but participation has been sparse. (Peterson and Hackman, 9/27)

Politico: Health Plans, Regulators Pan Trump's Plan To Allow Purchase Of Insurance Across State Lines

Trump didn't elaborate on how he would allow insurance to be sold across state lines. But most insurance experts find it hard to imagine how an executive order could supplant existing state regulations, and believe such a move would likely spark a legal challenge. "Health insurers already have the ability to sell insurance in multiple states as long as they comply with state consumer protection and licensing laws, which many already do," said Mike Consedine, CEO of the National Association of Insurance Commissioners, in a statement to POLITICO. "The NAIC has long been opposed to any attempt to reduce or preempt state authority or weaken consumer protections." (Demko and McCaskill, 9/27)

Previous KHN coverage: Sounds Like A Good Idea? Selling Insurance Across State Lines

6. After Months Of Hand-Wringing, Insurers' Deadline To Lock Into Marketplace Passes Without Dramatics

But the final decisions of some insurers hadn't been disclosed as of Wednesday evening, so there is still a risk that companies might make 11th-hour pullbacks. Meanwhile, Stat offers a guide to the upcoming enrollment season, Democrats call for an investigation into the administration's decision to shut down healthcare.gov on Sundays for maintenance and more.

The Wall Street Journal: Health Insurers Stay In ACA Despite Fears Of Last-Minute Exits

Health insurers appeared likely to offer Affordable Care Act plans in all U.S. counties next year, despite months of drama and worries among some state officials about last-minute exits, ahead of a late-Wednesday deadline. Some major insurers that had signaled that they might pull back, including Cigna Corp., Health Care Service Corp., Molina Healthcare Inc., Highmark Health and Independence Blue Cross, this week said they would stick to the states and regions where they had filed to offer ACA coverage. (Wilde Mathews, 9/27)

Stat: A Patient's Guide To Enrolling In Obamacare In The Age Of Trump

In less than six weeks, despite months of Republican attempts to dismantle Obamacare, millions of people will return to HealthCare.gov to buy insurance. Or at

least, they should. You might not know it from the political rhetoric, but the Affordable Care Act is still the law. Every American is still legally required to carry health insurance or face a tax penalty of at least \$695. There will still be plans available on the exchanges in every county, and the federal government will still provide the subsidies that help more than 9 million people afford their premiums. (Mershon, 9/28)

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The Hill: Senate Dems Demand Investigation Into ObamaCare Website Shutdowns
A group of Senate Democrats on Wednesday called for an investigation into the Trump administration's decision to periodically shut down the federal ObamaCare exchange website in the middle of the next open enrollment period. Sens. Brian Schatz (Hawaii), Elizabeth Warren (Mass.), Cory Booker (N.J.) and Chris Murphy (Conn.) asked the Department of Health and Human Services's inspector general to investigate plans for hours-long maintenance shutdowns of the HealthCare.gov website. (Weixel, 9/27)

Houston Chronicle: White House Cuts Target Obamacare Enrollment Efforts
The Trump administration quietly has slashed grants this month to dozens of grass-roots groups that help enroll people in Affordable Care Act health plans, potentially crippling upcoming sign-up efforts for 2018. Some of these "navigator groups" in Texas have had their grants cut severely enough to force them to shrink outreach to the state's high number of uninsured and drastically reduce the staff who help people sign up or re-enroll for coverage. (Deam, 9/27)

Bloomberg: Obamacare Rates Rise In Markets Unsettled By Trump
A day after Republicans failed yet again to repeal Obamacare, confusion sowed by President Donald Trump's opposition to the law is roiling the health-insurance market. In many states, insurers face a deadline of Wednesday to lock in their rates for next year under the Affordable Care Act, and some are announcing double-digit increases. Florida said Tuesday that most of its 45 percent average increase in premiums stems from the risk that the Trump administration will skip cost-sharing payments that reimburse insurers for lowering rates. Anthem Inc. said it would exit Maine, the latest state withdrawal for the one-time Obamacare stalwart. (Tracer, Edney and Tozzi, 9/27)

Georgia Health News: State Accepts Big Hikes On 2018 Exchange; Now It's Up To The Feds

State insurance officials Wednesday gave approval to premium increases of more than 50 percent for the four insurers participating in next year's insurance exchange in Georgia. The officials said that the huge rate hikes assume that subsidies for insurers

to lower consumers' out-of-pocket costs will not be paid next year by the federal government. (Miller, 9/27)

HEALTH LAW

7. In Face Of Skepticism, Republicans Vows Repeal Will Happen By 2019

Meanwhile, President Donald Trump remains optimistic that there will be movement in the next few months. "[In] the meantime, I have that little period of time, I'll negotiate with the Democrats if we can come up with a fantastic health care bill, that's okay with me. Good for both parties. Bipartisan," the president says.

The Wall Street Journal: GOP Promises Continued Push On Health-Care Rollback After Collapse

Republicans have a new promise on health care: It's not over. As the GOP trumpeted the framework of a new tax overhaul plan at the Capitol on Wednesday, lawmakers wrestled with their message to voters after promises to roll back the Affordable Care Act officially came up short Tuesday, when party leaders scrapped a final vote after nine months of failed attempts. Now, Republicans are promising that repeal will still happen before the current session of Congress ends in January 2019. (Peterson and Armour, 9/27)

The Hill: Trump Predicts Health Care Reform Will Pass In 'A Few Months'

President Trump in a new interview scheduled to air Thursday insisted that Republicans have the votes to repeal ObamaCare and will pass health care reform in "a few months." "So we'll bring it into a few months from now. We'll vote it - it's block grants. It's going to be great health care," Trump told "Fox & Friends." (Shelbourne, 9/27)

Bloomberg: Trump Vows To Try Again After Senate GOP Kills Health-Care Vote
Leaders decided Tuesday that the Senate won't vote before Saturday's deadline to use a fast-track procedure to keep Democrats from blocking a GOP-only bill and they said they would turn instead to overhauling the U.S. tax system. "We don't have the votes" for the health-care bill, co-sponsor Bill Cassidy of Louisiana told reporters in Washington. "We've made the decision, since we don't have the votes, we'll postpone that vote." (Litvan and Dennis, 9/27)

The Associated Press: Trump Says GOP Has Health Care Votes ... But It Doesn't Guess what? Turns out Republicans have the votes to push health care legislation

through the Senate, but they've been flummoxed because one supportive senator is in the hospital. That was President Donald Trump's view of where things stand Wednesday on Capitol Hill. And it's not true. Trump made the remarks a day after Senate GOP leaders discarded their drive to repeal President Barack Obama's health care overhaul. They lacked the votes to succeed, a not-so-minor snag that hadn't changed. The three GOP senators whose opposition sunk the Republican measure all remained against it, aides confirmed. (Fram, 9/27)

Politico: Democrats Welcome GOP Keeping Obamacare Repeal Alive
To the Republicans vowing to keep their Obamacare repeal drive alive for as long as it takes, Democrats say: Please, and thank you. While Senate Republicans abandoned their last-gasp attempt to topple Obamacare before a Saturday deadline, they're already suggesting they might try again next year. That timing — President Donald Trump said Wednesday that Congress would take up repeal again in the first quarter of next year — could keep the threat of upending the health care system front of mind in the thick of the 2018 campaign season. (Schor and Caygle, 9/28)

Meanwhile, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell is bruised after a tough week and a tougher summer —

The Associated Press: Senate Leader McConnell Faces Doubts After Losses
Senate Republicans are reckoning with an insurgent's win in Alabama that poses clear threats to their own grip on power and the leadership of Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. Nearly \$10 million spent by a McConnell-backed super PAC couldn't save incumbent GOP Sen. Luther Strange, who had been endorsed by President Donald Trump as well. It came the same day that McConnell, short of votes, pulled the plug on the latest and possibly final GOP effort to repeal and replace "Obamacare." (Werner, 9/28)

The New York Times: McConnell Gambled On Health Care And The Alabama Senate Race. He Lost.

Now, a majority leader celebrated for years as a brilliant tactician looks vulnerable — to dissent within his Senate conference and to insurgents from President Trump's populist wing of the party, who are looking to storm the Senate in 2018. And if Republicans fail to fulfill their next promise — overhauling the tax code — the consequences will be dire. (Stolberg, 9/27)

8. With Repeal Effort Stymied, Sen. Johnson Opens Probe Of Medicaid Expansion Costs In 8 States

The investigation signals that congressional Republicans may turn from efforts to repeal the health law and seek other ways to corral health spending. Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) says he wants to know if states got Medicaid funding by wrongly signing up people as expansion enrollees.

The Wall Street Journal: GOP Senator Is Examining Whether Some States Got Undue Medicaid Funds

A Republican senator who co-sponsored failed legislation to repeal most of the Affordable Care Act is looking at whether some states may have been getting federal money under the law's Medicaid expansion that they aren't entitled to. The probe by Sen. Ron Johnson of Wisconsin suggests that some Republicans, fresh off their congressional effort to repeal the health law and its expansion, will now zero in on other potential ways to rein in the program and its costs. (Armour, 9/27)

The Hill: GOP Senator Probes Rising Medicaid Costs

Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) is investigating whether certain states are receiving more federal Medicaid dollars than they should, leading to burgeoning costs. Johnson, the chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, is making the push one day after the ObamaCare repeal-and-replace bill that he cosponsored failed. (Sullivan, 9/27)

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Detroit Free Press: Senator To Gov. Snyder: Why Is Michigan Spending So Much On Medicaid?

Questioning costs incurred under the Medicaid expansion program authorized under the Affordable Care Act, U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Wis., said, "Federal expenditures under this expansion are soaring" in the Healthy Michigan program, which offers Medicaid coverage to people making between 100% and 138% of the federal poverty limit at reduced costs in exchange for them taking on healthy behaviors. Snyder's office didn't immediately respond to the letter from Johnson. (Spangler, 9/27)

Illinois News Network: U.S. Senate Panel Investigating 'Soaring' Medicaid Costs In Illinois, 7 Other States

The letter to [Gov. Bruce] Rauner says the costs of Medicaid expansion in Illinois exceed initial estimates by 90 percent. ... Johnson asked Rauner to provide information about new Medicaid enrollees in Illinois in 2016 and 2017, an explanation for why enrollment is increasing significantly faster than expected, why the per-enrollee costs increased significantly, and what the state's eligibility thresholds are. (9/27)

Honolulu Star-Advertiser: U.S. Sen. Johnson Questions Hawaii's Medicaid Spending
The chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs wants Gov. David Ige to explain what caused a rapid escalation in spending in Hawaii on Medicaid The letter also asks for information on why the costs for new enrollees have been increasing so rapidly, and whether the state has conducted or commissioned audits of those costs or the enrollees' eligibility. The letter also seeks "all documents and communications between and among employees or contractors of Hawaii" regarding determination of eligibility. (Dayton, 9/27)

New Hampshire Union Leader: Gov. Sununu Pressed For Answers On High Medicaid Costs
Federal expenditures on Medicaid are "soaring in New Hampshire and per-enrollee spending is rising exponentially," according to the chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, who wants some answers from Gov. Chris Sununu. In a three-page letter delivered Wednesday morning, Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Wis., submitted a list of questions designed to determine why the cost for new Medicaid beneficiaries in the state is rising so dramatically, up 253 percent from 2014 to 2015. (Solomon, 9/27)

9. Murkowski, Who Has Emerged As Key Player In Health Debates, Says Any Fixes Must Be Bipartisan

Senators are turning their attention back to stabilizing the marketplace following the collapse of their latest repeal-and-replace efforts.

The Hill: Murkowski: ObamaCare Bill 'Needs To Be Bipartisan'
Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) said Wednesday that ObamaCare-related legislation "needs to be bipartisan" following the collapse of GOP efforts to repeal the health-care law this week. "You know what, I think it needs to be bipartisan and that's why I'm working with Sen. Alexander and Sen. Murray," Murkowski said when asked whether a Republican-only ObamaCare bill could pass next year. (Sullivan, 9/27)

CQ: Market Stabilization Talks Resume As Insurers Finalize Rates
Republican senators are signaling an openness to stabilizing the individual insurance market in the short term after giving up on a last-ditch effort to replace President Barack Obama's health care law. The negotiations are restarting just as insurers finalize contracts for the exchanges that will use HealthCare.gov next year on Wednesday. (Clason, 9/27)

The Hill: Problem Solvers Caucus Pushes To Stabilize Insurance Markets

The House Problem Solvers Caucus is urging congressional leaders to consider bipartisan health-care policies aimed at stabilizing the insurance markets. "When we work across the aisle and govern together, Democrats and Republicans alike can find consensus on real solutions for the American people," the group wrote to Democratic and Republican leaders in both chambers. (Roubein, 9/27)

Meanwhile —

The Hill: GOP Senators Push For Delay Of ObamaCare Insurer Tax

Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) and 10 Senate Republicans introduced a bill Tuesday to delay an ObamaCare insurer tax before it goes into effect next year. The health insurance tax, a fee on insurance companies to help pay for health care subsidies, is slated to return in 2018 after a one-year hiatus. (Hellmann, 9/27)

CAPITOL HILL WATCH

10. With Deadlines Looming, Congress Tardy On Funding For Children's Insurance, Health Centers

The legislative process is lagging on renewing funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program and community health centers. Meanwhile, congressional Democrats warn that the GOP tax plan could lead to cuts in Medicare and Medicaid.

The Hill: Congress On Track To Miss Two Big Health Deadlines

Congress is at risk of missing two deadlines for health programs impacting millions of people, as funding is set to expire on Saturday. The House has yet to release a bill to fund the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) just days before the deadline. The Senate has released a bipartisan five-year bill to reauthorize the program, but a vote hasn't been scheduled. Separately, billions of dollars to fund community health centers — a safety net for 26 million people — are also up in the air. (Roubein, 9/27)

The Star Tribune: Federal Health Funds For Low-Income Kids, Uninsured Expiring
Minnesota health advocates are closely watching for signs of progress in Washington on programs that underwrite care for the uninsured and for low-income children. Unless reauthorized and funded, both are set to end on Saturday when the federal fiscal year ends. (Howatt, 9/28)

The Hill: Senate Passes Bipartisan Medicare Reform Bill

The Senate on Tuesday night unanimously passed a bill aimed at making Medicare

more efficient and saving it money. The passage of the under-the-radar bipartisan health-care reforms came on the same day that Senate Republicans abandoned a vote on a bill to repeal and replace ObamaCare. (Sullivan, 9/27)

The Hill: Dems Slam GOP Tax Plan As Deficit-Buster, Risk To Medicare
Democrats on Wednesday excoriated the GOP's proposed tax framework, saying it would blow an enormous hole in the deficit — warning that popular social programs are next. "Make no mistake: After [the] Republicans' tax plan blows a multitrillion-dollar hole in the deficit, they will sharpen their knives for Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and vital job-creating investments for middle-class families across America," said House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.). (Elis, 9/27)

VETERANS' HEALTH CARE

11. Despite Recent \$2.1B Boost, VA Choice Program May Need More Funding By December

But the House Veterans Affairs Committee was already anticipating that the emergency funding approved in August may not last the full six months.

The Associated Press: VA Running Out Of Money For Private Health Care Program
Weeks after a veterans' health initiative received \$2.1 billion in emergency funding, the Trump administration says the private-sector Veterans Choice health care program may need additional money as early as December to avoid a disruption of care for hundreds of thousands of veterans. The Department of Veterans Affairs said in a statement that it hoped to move quickly on a proposed long-term legislative fix that would give veterans even wider access to private doctors. The proposal, under review by the White House Office of Management and Budget, would seek money to keep Choice running for much of next year as VA implements wider changes. (Yen, 9/27)

The Associated Press: McCain Demands Accounting From VA On Money For Private Care

Sen. John McCain is demanding a full accounting from the Department of Veterans Affairs on the financial status of its private-sector health care program. The Associated Press reported this week that the Veterans Choice program could run out of money by year's end, despite receiving \$2.1 billion in emergency funding last month. (Yen, 9/28)

In other news —

CQ: VA Seeks Expanded Hiring Authority to Address Rising Suicides
Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin implored senators Wednesday to change

hiring laws so he can more quickly staff up the agency's mental health department, as veteran suicide rates remain high. "We are going to need legislative changes," Shulkin said at a Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee hearing. (Mejdrich, 9/27)

Orlando Sentinel: Navy Hospital Ship Comfort Ordered To Puerto Rico As Part Of U.S. Military Hurricane Response

Amid criticism of what's been called a slow federal response to Hurricane Maria destruction in Puerto Rico, the Pentagon said Wednesday that it will switch its efforts to land-based, long-term support. (Steele, 9/27)

MEDICAID

12. Mass. Officials Ask For Federal Permission To Trim Medicaid Rolls And Expenses

The state, facing a budget crunch on the program, is asking to move childless, non-disabled adults with incomes above the federal poverty level into insurance plans on the Affordable Care Act's marketplace. In other news, Montana officials say the Medicaid expansion is saving some correction department expenses, and Kansas finalizes a new system for Medicaid enrollment.

Modern Healthcare: Massachusetts Seeks To Move Adults Off Medicaid, Limit Drug Coverage

Facing steadily rising costs, Massachusetts has asked for federal permission to cull its Medicaid rolls, curb access to in-home and long-term care supports and limit the number of drugs it must cover. Massachusetts has seen its Medicaid and CHIP population jump more than 30% since it expanded Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act. All in all, Medicaid covers 1.9 million Massachusetts residents, or one-third of the state's population. But as the federal government no longer covers the total cost of expansion, Massachusetts said it needs to slim down the program because the costs are unsustainable. (Dickson, 9/27)

Montana Public Radio: Montana's Medicaid Expansion Saved Corrections \$7.6 Million Last Year

Medicaid expansion saved the Montana Department of Corrections \$7.6 million in the fiscal year that ended in July. ... since Medicaid expansion kicked in last year, the department has been able to bill Medicaid for care for 139 inmates it would not have been able to prior to the state legislature approving expansion under the federal Affordable Care Act. (Cates-Carney, 9/27)

KCUR: Kansas Launches Final Phase Of Troubled Enrollment System

The overhaul of the Kansas computer system for processing welfare and Medicaid applications recently went through its final implementation phase. State officials say the process went smoothly, especially compared to the system's initial rollout that delayed thousands of Medicaid applications. The Kansas Eligibility Enforcement System, or KEES, combines the processing for Medicaid and welfare benefits. The more than \$200 million system got off to a rocky start with delays before its eventual 2015 launch and backlogs for Medicaid applicants. (Koranda, 9/26)

PUBLIC HEALTH AND EDUCATION

13. 'Given The Scope Of This Crisis,' PhRMA CEO Backs Guidelines Limiting Opioid Prescriptions

The move follows efforts by pharmacy benefit managers to restrict the supply of opioids to first-time users. The decision is creating some backlash for patients with chronic pain who are worried they can no longer get the treatment they and their doctors feel they need.

Stat: PhRMA CEO Announces Support For Limiting Opioid Prescriptions

The pharmaceutical industry now supports limiting prescriptions of opioid painkillers to a seven-day supply for acute pain management, PhRMA CEO Stephen J. Ubl announced Wednesday at a meeting of the White House's opioid abuse commission. "Too often, individuals receive a 30-day supply of opioid medicines for minor treatments for short term pain," Ubl said. "Overprescribing and dispensing can lead to patients taking longer than necessary and excess pills falling into the wrong hands." (Joseph, 9/27)

The Hill: Drugmaker Group Backs Limiting Opioid Supplies

A powerful drug industry trade group announced its support for limiting a patient's supply of opioids to seven days for first-time acute pain treatment, as a way to curb the opioid epidemic plaguing the country. "Too often individuals receive a 30-day supply of opioid medicines for minor treatments or short-term pain," Stephen Ubl, president and CEO of Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, said. (Roubein, 9/27)

In other news on the epidemic —

Stat: Relaxing Privacy Rules To Fight Opioid Addiction Draws Fire From Treatment Advocates

The on-the-ground groups targeting the opioids crisis almost universally support

Washington's efforts to direct more resources and flexibility toward their work. But a new coalition is cautioning that one proposed federal change — supported both by lawmakers and the Trump administration's opioid commission — could actually hurt the people they're all trying to help. At the center of the controversy: an effort to relax federal privacy rules for substance abuse treatments. (Mershon, 9/27)

KCUR: Kansas' Prescription Drug Monitoring Program Gets \$178K Federal Grant
A prescription drug monitoring program in Kansas will receive a federal grant worth more than \$178,000 to help fight the opioid crisis. The Kansas Board of Pharmacy oversees K-TRACS, a system for monitoring prescriptions for controlled substances. Board Executive Secretary Alexandra Blasi says doctors, dentists and pharmacists who participate in the program report their prescription activity to the state to verify a patient's history. (Shaar, 9/27)

Richmond Times-Dispatch: Fatal Overdoses Down, Overdoses Up Across Region So Far In 2017

While the number of people who have overdosed on opioids in Richmond and Chesterfield, Hanover and Henrico counties rose about 40 percent year-over-year as of mid-September, deaths from the drugs are down 19 percent from the 95 local authorities had tracked by this point in 2016. (Burnell Evans, 9/27)

Miami Herald: Miami May Sue Big Pharma Over Opioid Crisis

City commissioners on Thursday are poised to hire a private law firm to pursue a complaint against prescription opioid manufacturers and distributors that would seek compensation for the resources Miami has been forced to dedicate to reviving overdose victims, policing drug-related crimes and healthcare. (Smiley, 9/27)

14. Quick, Low-Cost Dipstick Test For Dengue And Zika Could Help Diagnose And Track Outbreaks

"You can go from a sample to an answer within about 15 minutes," says one of the authors of the test. In today's other public health news: food safety violations, the link between exercise and willpower, autism and health issues of women refugees.

Stat: Cheap, Fast Test For Zika And Dengue Could Cost Just \$1

A new blood test can cheaply and quickly distinguish between the mosquito-borne Zika and dengue viruses, researchers reported Wednesday, giving public health officials a valuable tool to track the spread of outbreaks and prepare for the possible consequences of the different infections. The test, which was described in the journal *Science Translational Medicine*, relies on a simple paper strip, and researchers hope it can eventually be purchased for less than \$1. The scientists who developed the test

are at work to commercialize it and production would need to be scaled up before it could be deployed widely. (Joseph, 9/27)

WBUR: Study: New Test Could Check For Zika Quickly And Cheaply

A new paper in the journal Science Translational Medicine offers a potential step forward for Zika testing: a fast-acting "dipstick"-type test much like a pregnancy test that costs as little as \$5 per strip and can distinguish between Zika and dengue fever — a difficult challenge because the viruses are similar. It could be ready for broad use within a couple of years, says co-author Kimberly Hamad-Schifferli, associate professor of engineering at University of Massachusetts Boston. (Goldberg, 9/27)

WBUR: FDA Not Doing Enough To Fix Serious Food Safety Violations, Report Finds
The Food Safety Modernization Act, which was signed into law in 2011, aims to ensure a prevention-oriented approach to food safety. ... But the new report concludes that the FDA has rarely taken advantage of these new tools. (Aubrey, 9/27)

The New York Times: How Exercise Might Increase Your Self-Control

For most of us, temptations are everywhere, from the dessert buffet to the online shoe boutique. But a new study suggests that exercise might be a simple if unexpected way to increase our willpower and perhaps help us to avoid making impulsive choices that we will later regret. (Reynolds, 9/27)

Stat: Can Tailored Swim Lessons Protect Children With Autism From Drowning?

Amusement parks, lakes, neighbors' pools — they are dangers that families of children with autism have long known anecdotally to beware of. ... An authoritative study earlier this year put some numbers to the fear. Drowning is the most common fatal injury among children with autism, researchers found. Children with autism age 14 and younger are 160 times as likely to die from drowning as the general pediatric population, with drowning risk peaking from age 5 to 7. (Samuel, 9/27)

Kaiser Health News: For Some Refugees, Women's Health Care Is A Culture Shock

Dinnertime is nearing, and the kitchen in this tidy home is buzzing. Lamyaa Manty, a 29-year-old Iraqi refugee, wears a neon-pink T-shirt and stirs a big pot of eggplant, onion, potatoes and tomatoes on the stove, a staple of Iraqi cooking called tepsi. Spinning around with a butterfly net in her hand and dancing to Arabic music is Fatima Abdullah, an exuberant 9-year-old. At the center of the activity is Fatima's aunt, Salima Abdullah Khalifa, a burgundy-haired matriarch from Baghdad, who pours Pepsi into small glasses on the table. (Varney, 9/28)

WOMEN'S HEALTH

15. Unsafe Abortions Persist Even In Developed Countries, Report Finds

A team led by researchers at the World Health Organization and the Guttmacher Institute looked at data from 61 countries and found that the places where abortions are safest are also where they are most rare.

Los Angeles Times: Abortions: Easier To Obtain Than Ever, Yet Nearly Half Worldwide Are Deemed Unsafe, Study Finds

It's never been easier to have a safe abortion. With improvements in drugs designed to end a pregnancy and the spread of telemedicine, women all over the world are gaining access to low-risk, noninvasive abortions. But does this really mean that dangerous procedures are becoming a thing of the past? To find out, a team led by researchers at the World Health Organization in Geneva and the Guttmacher Institute in New York scoured abortion data from 61 countries and determined the level of safety for each procedure. The results were published Wednesday in the journal Lancet. (Kaplan, 9/27)

In other news —

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The Associated Press: Appeals Court Won't Reconsider Arkansas Abortion Pill Ruling
A federal appeals court cleared the way Wednesday for Arkansas to impose new restrictions on the way the abortion pill is administered in the state, saying it won't reconsider a panel's decision in favor of the 2015 law. The 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals said it won't reconsider a three-judge panel's ruling lifting a federal judge's preliminary injunction against the law. The measure requires doctors providing the abortion pill to maintain a contract with another physician with admitting privileges at a hospital who agrees to handle any complications. (DeMillo, 9/27)

Reuters: Federal Court Strikes Down Abortion Ultrasound Law In Kentucky

A federal court struck down a law in Kentucky on Wednesday that requires women seeking an abortion to first undergo an ultrasound and hear a description of the embryo or fetus. The U.S. District Court Western District of Kentucky ruled that the state law is unconstitutional because it violates the free-speech rights of the patient and doctor, court documents showed. (9/28)

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The Associated Press: Kentucky's Abortion Law Struck Down By Federal Court
The ACLU said in a statement that the court recognized that the law "appears to inflict

psychological harm on abortion patients,” and causes them to “experience distress as a result.” Attorney Alexa Kolbi-Molinas with the ACLU’s Reproductive Freedom Project said in the statement that, “We are pleased that Kentuckians will no longer be subjected to this demeaning and degrading invasion into their personal health care decisions.” (9/27)

Reveal: Bayer Pulls Contraceptive Device From Global Markets

Essure, a device that represents the only permanent, non-surgical form of contraception, will no longer be available for purchase anywhere in the world except for America, though the U.S. Food and Drug Administration continues to monitor the device’s safety and efficacy. (Craven, 9/27)

STATE WATCH

16. Rural Hospital Ills Reflect Economic Troubles In Small Town USA

In other hospital-related news, an industry lawsuit becomes a stumbling block in Connecticut’s efforts to adopt a state budget; Brigham and Women’s struggle to control costs; and how a children’s hospital is focused on lowering the risk of HIV among young sexual assault victims.

Georgia Health News/HuffPost: A Hospital Crisis Is Killing Rural Communities. This State Is ‘Ground Zero’

Rural hospitals are in danger across the country, their closures both a symptom of economic trouble in small-town America and a catalyst for further decline. Since 2010, 82 rural hospitals have closed nationwide. As many as 700 more are at risk of closing within the next 10 years, according to Alan Morgan, the CEO of the National Rural Health Association, a nonprofit professional organization that lobbies on rural health issues. The reasons are complex, woven into the fabric of a changing economy and an evolving health care system. But these rural hospital closures are hitting the southern United States the hardest. (Weber and Miller, 9/22)

The CT Mirror: Old Hospital Lawsuit Poses New Wrinkle In Budget Talks

The struggle to adopt a new state budget hit another stumbling block Wednesday centered on a hospital industry lawsuit. At issue is a new taxing arrangement that the administration and the Connecticut Hospital Association negotiated that would help both sides by leveraging \$365 million in new federal aid for them to share. (Phaneuf, 9/27)

Stat: An Inside Look At Brigham And Women’s Hospitals Struggle To Cut Costs

The heart of the Brigham’s austerity plan was a buyout offered this past June to more

than 1,000 senior employees, including more than 400 veteran nurses. Some 800 workers decided to retire, including 7 percent of the nursing staff — a remarkably high acceptance rate. Many of them are leaving this week. While hundreds of new nurses are being hired at substantially lower entry-level pay, the large exodus underscores a critical challenge for the Brigham's leadership: how to cut costs without harming patient care. (Winslow, 9/28)

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel: Children's Hospital Works To Lower Risk Of HIV For Sex Assault Victims

[Barbara] Cuene is just one member of a team at Children's Hospital taking a new approach to drastically reduce the risk of child victims of sexual assault contracting HIV. That innovative work, in partnership with Walgreens, puts an entire 28-day supply of the medication, known as post-exposure prophylaxis, into the hands of victims and their families before they leave the emergency room. (Lutheran, 9/27)

17. State Highlights: Molina's Ousted CEO Swoops In To Save Calif. Clinics; Nursing Homes Challenge Fla. Governor's New Requirements

Media outlets report on news from California, Florida, Massachusetts, Iowa, Tennessee, Minnesota, Texas, Colorado and Michigan.

Modern Healthcare: Ousted Molina Healthcare CEO To Snap Up Insurer's Calif. Clinics

Health insurer Molina Healthcare is getting out of the primary care business to focus on insurance, and it's quietly shutting down medical clinics in underserved areas across the country, according to its former CEO. Dr. J. Mario Molina, who was unexpectedly ousted earlier this year from the company his father created, is in the process of buying 17 of those clinics in California that would have closed otherwise. The California clinics serve about 120,000 patients annually. (Livingston, 9/27)

News Service of Florida: Nursing Homes Call Florida's Generator Deadline 'Impossible' Pointing to "impossible" timeframes, an industry group has filed a legal challenge to new requirements by Gov. Rick Scott's administration that nursing homes and assisted-living facilities quickly install generators to power air-conditioning systems. (Saunders, 9/27)

The Associated Press: Prosecutors Seek \$74M In Deadly Meningitis Outbreak Federal prosecutors say a Massachusetts pharmacy owner who was sentenced to prison after a nationwide meningitis outbreak that killed 76 people and sickened hundreds more should pay nearly \$74 million in restitution. In a filing on Tuesday, prosecutors said the money would compensate about half of the victims of the 2012